COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER
Issue 19

KBA
KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

Chelonia mydas © Daniel Torobekov

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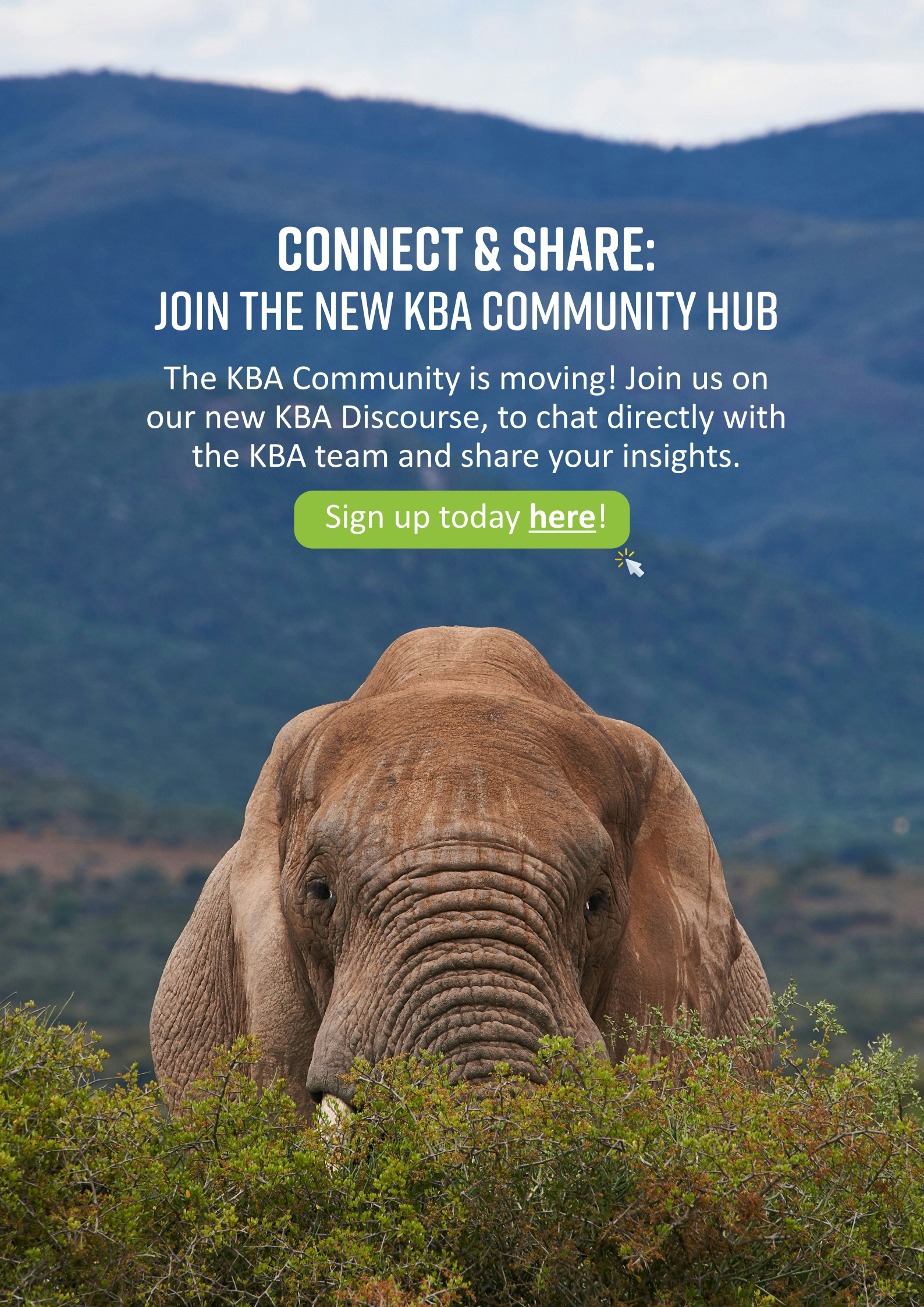
HIGHLIGHTS FOR THIS ISSUE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GLOBAL

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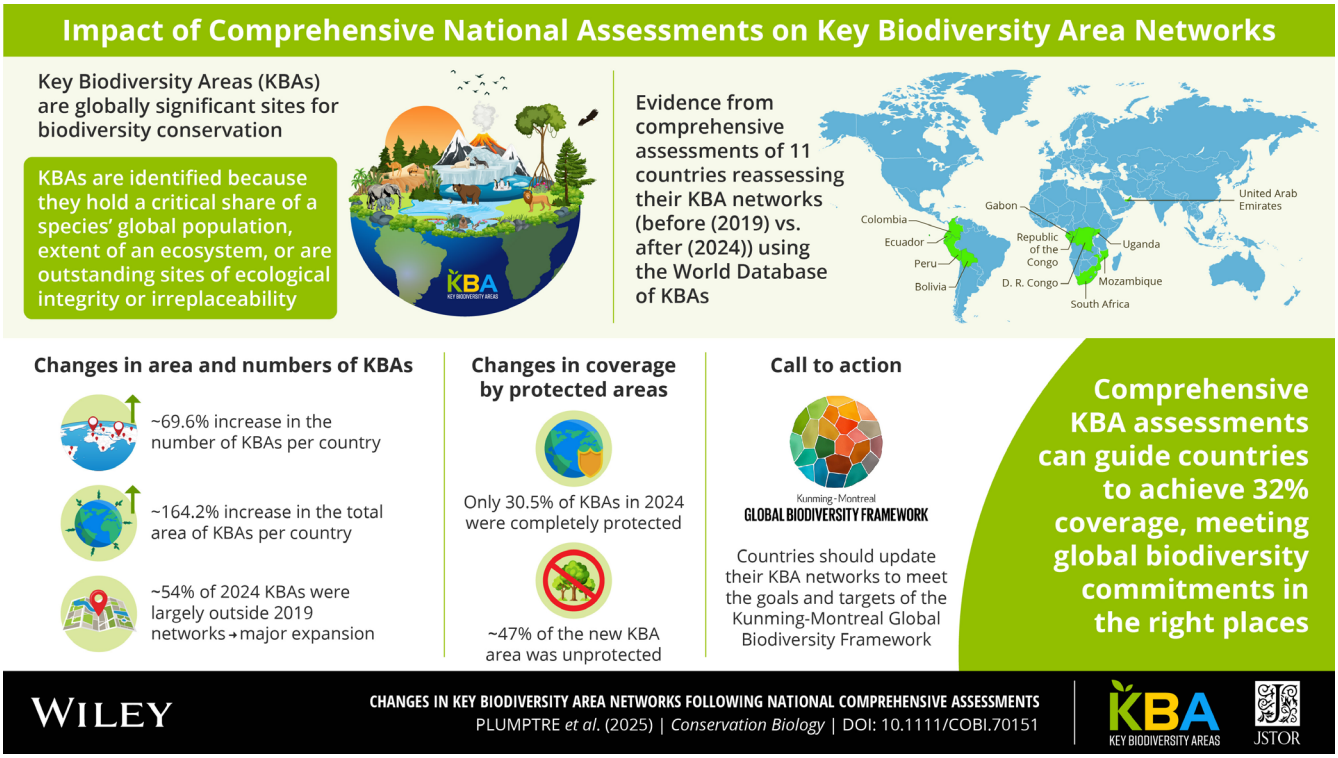
Half of the World's Most Critical Biodiversity Sites Remain Undiscovered



A groundbreaking new study reveals that nearly half of the world's most critical sites for biodiversity conservation remain unidentified, posing a significant risk to global efforts aimed at halting species extinctions and protecting ecosystems essential for life on Earth.

The research, published in Conservation Biology, shows that countries that make comprehensive assessments of their Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) have seen an average increase of 164% in the total area of KBAs, and a 70% increase in the number of sites identified. Astonishingly, 54% of all sites in a country occurred largely outside any previously recognised KBAs.

KBAs are critical sites for biodiversity conservation. They are globally significant sites where the most important populations of species are found, where globally significant areas of ecosystems exist, and where outstanding sites of ecological integrity or irreplaceability occur. Identifying these areas is crucial to meeting the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which aims to reverse biodiversity loss and stop human-driven extinctions by 2030.

The study examined changes in the KBA network across eleven countries in South America, Africa, and the Middle East, comparing the data before and after comprehensive assessments of their KBAs conducted between 2019 and 2024. All these countries had recognised some KBAs before 2019, mostly for birds through BirdLife International's Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) programme. However, none of them had made comprehensive assessments or applied the KBA criteria to all the species and ecosystems for which they had data. The findings showed on average there was a doubling of KBA sites that were largely outside the original network, and more than a doubling of total KBA area— revealing a far more extensive and varied network of vital sites.

"We cannot protect what we don't know is there. We have a tool in the KBA criteria that can help us identify globally significant sites but this needs to be applied across all countries", said Andrew

Plumptre, Head of the KBA Secretariat. “We must act now to ensure all critical places for nature are identified and effectively conserved”.

“There is an urgent need for all countries to assess their KBAs to better inform their planning for 30 x 30 expansion of protection to achieve Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework”, said Zoltan Waliczky of BirdLife International, who led a project to make comprehensive assessments of KBAs in seven of the countries, with support from the Bezos Earth Fund. “If we do not do this in the next few years, we may miss the opportunity to have the greatest impact for conservation and achieve the goal to halt extinctions”.

Published just before delegates from around the world gather for the IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, this paper calls on all countries to update their KBA networks by 2030. Several sessions at the congress highlighted why KBAs matter most and showcase the countries that have made comprehensive assessments and how they are using the results to better plan their conservation of 30% by 2030.

The findings underscore a clear message for governments, funders, and conservationists: To achieve the Global Biodiversity Framework’s target of halting extinctions and protecting ecosystems, we must first know exactly where these irreplaceable biodiversity sites are found.

KBAs at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025: A Global Momentum for Biodiversity Conservation

From landmark motions advocating for species-level corporate transparency to the Arabic translation of the KBA standards, the IUCN 2025 World Conservation Congress spotlighted KBAs as indispensable to global biodiversity goals.

Photo courtesy of Andy Plumptre

The IUCN 2025 World Conservation Congress (WCC) wrapped up with a resounding message: **Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are now firmly on the global conservation map.** With some 150 motions ratified, several ground-breaking resolutions specifically championed KBAs, underscoring their vital role in the future of biodiversity conservation.

Among the standout motions, Motion 80 demanded companies not only measure but openly disclose their impacts down to the species level within ecosystems—an innovation backed by a large majority of government and conservation members alike. If Target 15 of the KMGBF is to have an impact in reversing biodiversity loss and halting extinctions, a key goal of the KMGBF, then impacts on species have to be measured.

The Congress also adopted motions targeting oceanic KBAs: Motion 129 called for all nations to identify KBAs in the high seas, while Motion 27 focused on creating a marine conservation area in Macaronesia, updating the region's KBA map. Other motions spotlighted the urgent need to protect amphibians (Motion 75), identify fungi and invertebrate KBAs (Motion 91), and enhance conservation of ecological connectivity through KBAs (Motion 127).

The KBA booth was a hive of activity, attracting keen interest—especially from government delegates eager to learn more. A milestone announcement came from the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, which launched Arabic translations of the KBA Standard and Guidelines—a first in the Arab world—and committed to accelerating KBA conservation across the region. Neighbouring countries Oman, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Tunisia are already making strides with national KBA coordination groups actively updating networks.

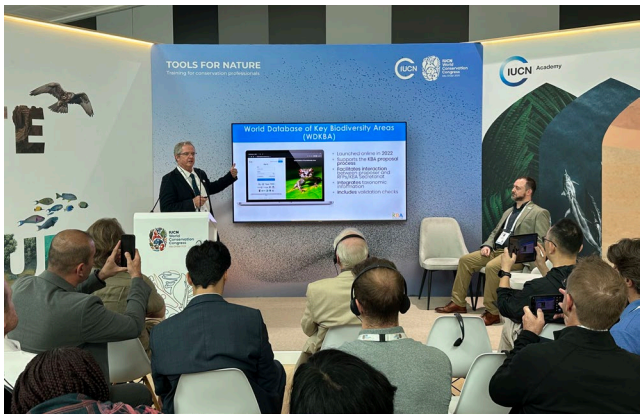
Photo courtesy of Andy Plumptre

Scientific evidence presented at the Congress showed that countries conducting comprehensive KBA updates double their number of recognised KBAs on average, revealing that those without recent updates are missing half of their vital biodiversity sites. This eye-opening insight prompted calls for global renewed efforts to update KBA networks, an appeal well received by many visiting the KBA booth.

The Congress underscored that KBAs are not just protected lands but dynamic, data-driven tools essential for guiding private sector risk assessments, donor investments, and national policies aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Indigenous Peoples and local communities managing these areas were recognised as crucial partners in stewardship, emphasizing that conservation success blends science and local leadership.

By spotlighting KBA advancements and forging cross-sector partnerships, the IUCN 2025 Congress created a path for accelerated biodiversity conservation. The global community left Abu Dhabi energised, acknowledging that safeguarding KBAs is key to halting extinctions, restoring ecosystems, and securing a sustainable future for all.

The WCC 2025 strengthened a worldwide movement to identify, conserve, and invest in the planet's most irreplaceable biodiversity sites. The future of global conservation is undoubtedly tied to these critical areas.

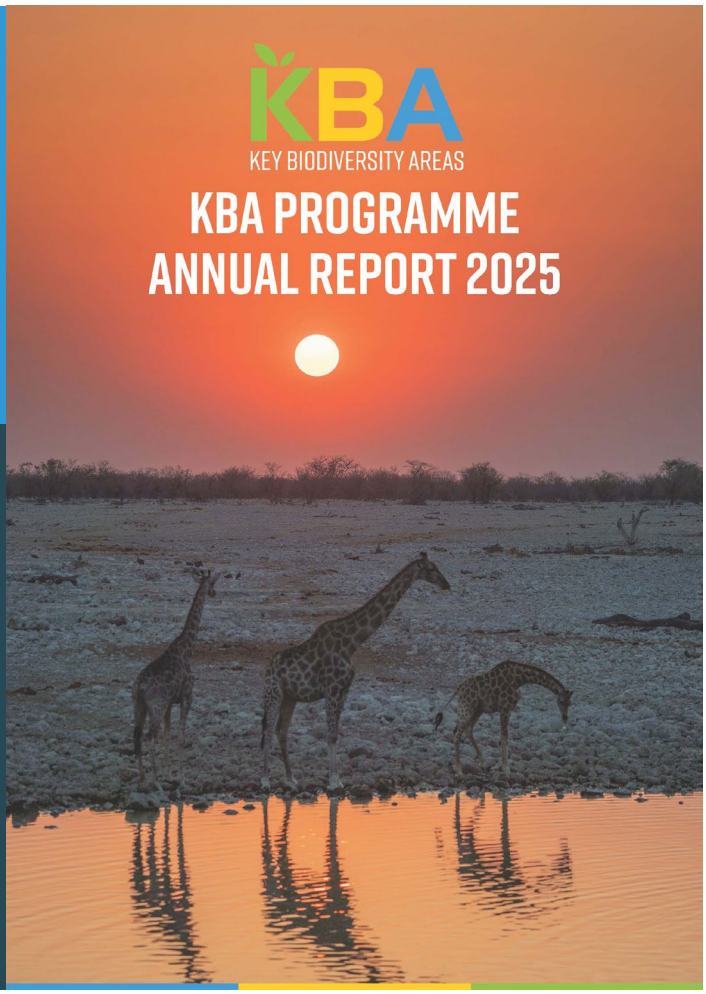


Photos courtesy of Andrew Snyder

KBA Annual Report for 2025

In 2024, the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Partnership made remarkable strides toward safeguarding the planet's most critical sites for biodiversity. With concerted efforts across 37 countries, the integration of cutting-edge digital tools, and growing private sector engagement, KBAs are now central to global conservation strategies including the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework.

- 1,435 KBAs were modified or added to the WDKBA during 2024
- As part of the Bezos KBA project, 722 sites were confirmed as KBAs
- 11 countries have completed comprehensive assessments of their KBAs
- 37 Countries had established KBA National Coordination Groups by end 2024
- 414 people were trained in how to identify KBAs in 2024



The year 2024 marked a significant chapter for global biodiversity conservation as the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Programme achieved unprecedented progress in identifying, assessing, and protecting sites crucial for the survival of the planet's diverse life forms. The KBA Partnership is not only mapping critical biodiversity sites but also aligning its efforts with the landmark Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), accelerating countries' commitments to safeguard nature.

At the heart of these achievements is the comprehensive assessment and updating of KBA networks in 37 countries, with an additional 28 countries actively working to establish National Coordination Groups (NCGs) that bring together governments, NGOs, Indigenous peoples, scientists, and the private sector. This collaboration is critical for generating reliable data on globally important species and ecosystems, enhancing policy decisions, and driving conservation action.

Funding support from notable donors like the Bezos Earth Fund has bolstered assessments in countries across the Andean region and Congo Basin, resulting in 722 KBAs formally proposed or reassessed in 2024 alone. These efforts integrated over 3,000 qualifying species spanning more than two dozen taxonomic groups, expanding the global World Database of KBAs by 1,435 sites—many of which represent previously unrecognised areas outside formal protected zones.

Technological innovation has been a game-changer. The introduction of an online proposal platform drastically reduced KBA validation times from months to weeks, streamlining the review process and encouraging timely confirmations of site importance. The pilot KBA scoping tool

efficiently identifies species qualifying a site as a KBA, helping focus assessment efforts and enhancing data accuracy.

The private sector's interest in using KBA data also surged, with more than 200 organizations accessing biodiversity data through the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT). This heightened usage underscores the growing role of KBAs in helping companies manage biodiversity risks and comply with international sustainability reporting standards like TNFD, GRI, and ESRS.

Countries including South Africa, Uganda, and the Philippines made significant headway in their KBA network assessments, often incorporating findings into their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Notably, the Philippines updated 126 KBAs and identified 213 new ones, covering a substantial portion of its terrestrial and marine territories—a vital step towards meeting national and international biodiversity commitments.

Training and capacity building have kept pace with these developments, with over 400 individuals trained across 14 courses worldwide, empowering local experts and stakeholders to apply KBA criteria effectively.

Looking ahead, the KBA Partnership's strategic priorities focus on expanding support for National Coordination Groups, developing a dynamic monitoring platform within the World Database of KBAs, enhancing web resources to meet diverse user needs, and rolling out government-targeted training to better leverage KBA assessments for implementing the KMGBF.

With approximately $6 million invested in 2024 and a commitment to sustainable funding models supported by private sector partnerships, the KBA Programme is not only charting the most vital habitats for biodiversity but also fostering a new era of collaboration between governments, communities, scientists, and businesses—together working to secure a resilient future for nature and humanity.

Read the full report here.

Discover the new Key Biodiversity Areas Website

The new Key Biodiversity Areas website is a major advance for the conservation community. Launched during the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the new site showcases a bold approach and offers an accessible online experience built for impact and engagement.

Designed for Every User

The site features a fully responsive design for mobile, tablet, and desktop so people can engage with Key Biodiversity Areas content wherever they are. Intuitive navigation and search functions ensure visitors find what they need in seconds, whether they're scientists, policymakers, or nature enthusiasts.

Smart, Simple Content Management

Content editing is effortless thanks to pre-built templates, allowing the KBA team to create and refine pages without technical hassle. The addition of multilingual support means global audiences will have access to content and assets in various languages. In the first stage, Spanish and French will be available, with more languages planned from 2026 onwards.

Dynamic Factsheets and direct search

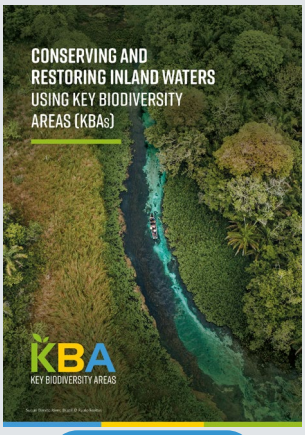
An upgraded factsheet and tabular search interface bring a fresh, modern design to core KBA resources, making it easier to explore sites and find vital information. The new search bar offers the possibility to look for specific keywords or topics on the website, or find sites' factsheets directly.

Empowering Community Dialogue

A new KBA Discourse forum was set up and is accessible on the KBA website. This modern, open-source community platform is designed to foster meaningful, organised conversations. It offers threaded discussions, powerful search, and user-friendly navigation, keeping content discoverable and easy to follow. With this platform, the KBA community will have a secure, accessible digital space built for collaboration and growth.

The new KBA website is a leap forward for biodiversity conservation, designed to activate community, accelerate discovery, and keep the world's most vital places at the centre of attention.

Latest KBA publications



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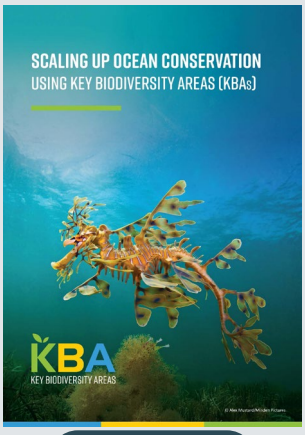

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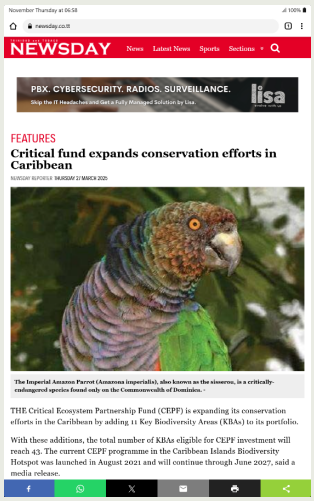
KBAs in the news



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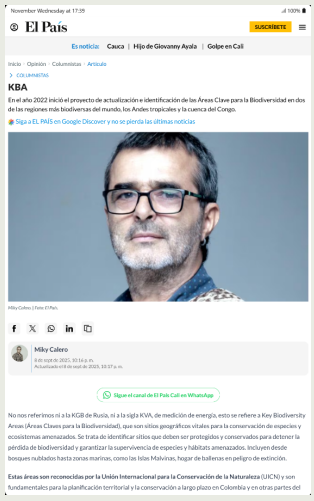

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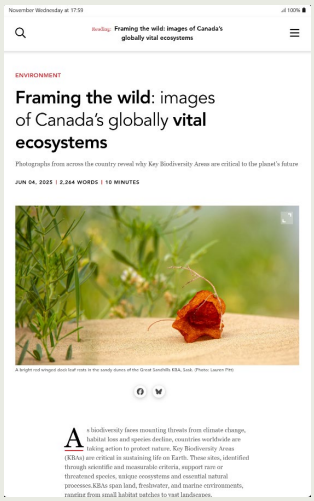

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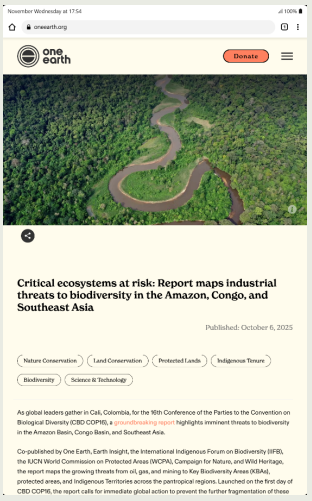

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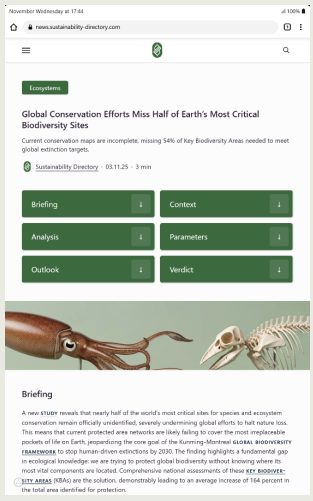

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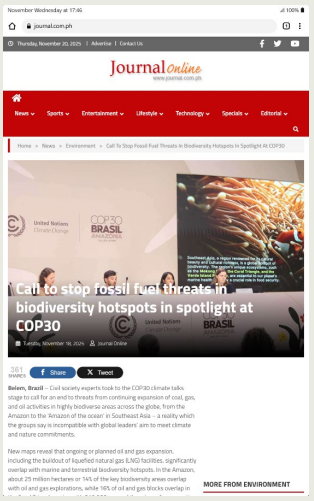

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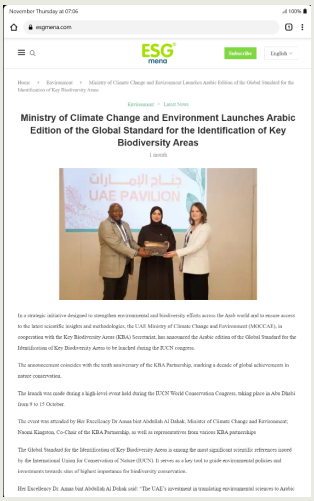

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SOUTH AMERICA

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Safeguarding a Second Chance: Alianza Jambato Expands Key Biodiversity Area for Critically Endangered Harlequin Toad

Author: Alianza Jambato

Alianza Jambato, an organization committed to the conservation of threatened biodiversity, has proposed a crucial amendment to the Angamarca Jambato Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) in Ecuador. This strategic expansion is designed to ensure the long-term survival of the Critically Endangered Jambato Harlequin Toad (*Atelopus ignescens*) by officially incorporating the complete micro-watersheds essential for its reproductive success and adult life cycle. The proposed adjustment, driven by ongoing field-based knowledge, aims to integrate aquatic breeding streams and adjacent terrestrial habitats into the conservation boundary, enabling comprehensive watershed-level management.

Jambato Sanctuary © Mica Stacey, Alianza Jambato

Atelopus ignescens amplexus © Mica Stacey, Alianza Jambato

- **Securing the Species' Refuge:** The Jambato Harlequin Toad, once thought to be extinct until its rediscovery in 2016, survives in Angamarca, its last known refuge in the central Andes of Ecuador.
- **Comprehensive Conservation:** The expansion supports integrated management to mitigate threats like habitat degradation, water contamination, and infrastructure development, while also facilitating the securing of long-term funding.
- **Community-Informed Science:** The amendment was proposed and reviewed by Alianza Jambato, the original proposers of the KBA, reflecting updated information and local, on-the-ground realities.

The Jambato Harlequin Toad (*Atelopus ignescens*), a once-abundant species across the Ecuadorian Andes, suffered a devastating population crash in the 1980s, largely attributed to the deadly fungal disease chytridiomycosis and compounded by habitat loss and climate change. For nearly three decades, it was feared extinct until a small, relict population was fortunately discovered in 2016 in the Angamarca Valley, Ecuador. This remarkable rediscovery ignited new hope and led to the creation of the Angamarca Jambato KBA, led by Alianza Jambato Foundation.

Alianza Jambato, formed by a coalition of researchers and conservationists, has been actively monitoring this last known wild population. Their latest initiative proposes a vital update to the KBA's delineation to enhance protection for this iconic amphibian.

A Strategic Boundary Expansion

The proposed amendment focuses on an expansion of the current KBA boundary to include the micro-watersheds where A. ignescens has been consistently recorded. This proposal is not a simple geographic adjustment; it is an ecologically driven measure to capture the full scope of the species' habitat needs.

Field observations confirm that these micro-watersheds serve as key reproductive sites for the species, with tadpoles and metamorphs frequently found in the streams. This presence suggests a strong, critical link between successful reproduction and the quality of local water. Furthermore, adult toads are consistently observed near riverbanks within these same micro-watersheds, highlighting the necessity of

protecting both the aquatic and adjacent terrestrial habitats that support the species through its entire life cycle.

The new site delineation uses hydrological units, specifically following the boundaries of the Guambaine watershed, derived from Digital Elevation Model (DEM) analysis and verified by field occurrence data. By adopting a watershed-level approach, the amendment ensures that conservation efforts can be truly integrated, addressing threats like water contamination from upstream sources and infrastructure development that might compromise habitat connectivity.

Conservation in Action and Partnership

The Angamarca Jambato KBA, already recognized as a Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) site, is critically important for global biodiversity. The KBA's original proposal was based on the presence of the Critically Endangered toad, applying criteria such as A1a and B1 of the Global KBA Standard.

The ongoing work of Alianza Jambato, which includes a strong focus on community-based conservation, is integral to this effort. The organization actively collaborates with the local community and authorities in Angamarca, promoting environmental education, capacity building, and incorporating traditional knowledge. This partnership is critical, as the toad persists in a complex landscape marked by agricultural use and human intervention. The proposed adjustment, developed by Alianza Jambato's technical and field coordination teams, reflects this deep, on-the-ground knowledge.

This strategic boundary expansion will not only better capture the ecological requirements of A. ignescens but will also significantly strengthen efforts to protect water quality, mitigate threats, and secure long-term funding for this critically endangered amphibian and the unique Andean riverine ecosystems it calls home. It aims to transform the KBA into a resilient management unit focused on the ecological and long-term viability of the species.

Jambato Sanctuary © Mica Stacey, Alianza Jambato

KBAs updated and confirmed in the Americas

As a result of the ongoing work to expand national KBA networks throughout the Americas, various sites have been confirmed in recent months.

Ecuador

Angamarca Jambato (ID 100124): This site is a Key Biological Area (KBA) for *Atelopus ignescens*, a species previously considered extinct and rediscovered in 2016 in the community of Angamarca. Alianza Jambato, the organization working with the species, proposed expanding the original KBA to include areas where new individuals of the species have been recorded and to conserve the species' habitat.

Atelopus ignescens © mateoan

Chile

Five KBAs were reassessed and confirmed. These sites are also AZE sites and were reassessed by the Ministry of the Environment team as part of the GEF Zero Extinction Alliance project. The sites are:

Amincha - Carcote - Ascotán system (ID 47094): This is a KBA/AZE for an amphibian species, *Telmatobius philippii*, which triggers criteria A1a, A1e, and B1.

Precordillera de Putre (ID 201552): This is a KBA/AZE for an amphibian species, *Telmatobius pefauri*, which triggers criteria A1a, A1e, and B1.

Puquios (ID 100088): This is a KBA/AZE for an amphibian species, *Telmatobius fronteriensis*, which triggers criteria A1a and A1e.

Tocopilla (ID 47103): This is a KBA/AZE for a plant species, *Eriosyce laui*, which triggers criteria A1a and A1e.

Los Molles – Pichidangui (ID 47092): This is a KBA/AZE for a species of plant, *Eriosyce chilensis*, which triggers criteria A1a, A1e, B1.

Telmatobius pefauri © Felipe Rabanal

Argentina

The following sites in the province of Corrientes were re-evaluated by Aves Argentinas, and this is a continuation of the identification and re-evaluation process of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in the province of Misiones.

Aguapey River Basin (ID 19437): This KBA was re-evaluated to correct the original boundaries. Five bird species were re-evaluated, and one snake species and one mammal were included.

Mora Cue and Cuay Grande Baths (ID 201764): This is a new KBA that replaced an old site with location and delineation errors. Two trigger bird species were included; the Saffron-cowled blackbird and the Marsh seedeater.

Marsh seedeater © Ladislao Földesi

Colombia

The following sites in Colombia are located within the Awa Community territories and were proposed by the Community with the support of taxonomic experts.

Paila Tunda Alto Albi Guardians Reserve (ID 201724): The site includes land and natural resources that are part of an officially recognized Indigenous Reserve. This is a KBA for *Rhaebo blombergi,* which triggers criterion A1c.

Pingullo Nature Reserve (201725): This site qualified as a KBA because of the documented presence of threatened anuran species within the Pingullo Indigenous Nature Reserve.

Harpy eagle - Katza wam Reserve (ID 201726): This site was recognised as a KBA due to the documented presence of a threatened anuran species (*Boana nigra,* which triggered criteria A1b, B1).

Rhaebo blombergi © Jorge Aguilera

Other sites were reassessed alongside Asociación Calidris, resulting in various birds being included as qualifying species.

Cañón del Río Barbas y Bremen (ID 14422): The reassessment of this site included three trigger species: the Tolima Parakeet (criterion B2), and the Cauca Guan and the Yellow-eared Parrot (criteria A1b and B2).

Bombona and Vancouver Lagoons (ID 14455): The species *Bolborhynchus ferrugineifrons* (criterion B2) and *Cinclodes excelsior* (criterion B2) were reassessed. A new trigger species, *Ognorhynchus icterotis* (criteria A1b, B2), was included.

Cañón del Río Combeima (ID 14510): Two bird species were re-evaluated and five proposed, meeting criterion B3b: Yellow-fronted Redstart, Rufous-crowned Flycatcher, Andean Goldfinch, Tourmaline Sun Angel, Tolima Dove, Saltwood Finch, and Yellow-headed Finch.

Dry Enclave of the Dagua River (ID 19135): Information on five bird species was updated. These trigger criterion B3b: Colombian chachalaca, Grayish Piculet, Bar-crested Antshriket, Apical flytcather, and Blue-headed Sapphire.

Inirida River Star (ID 44739): This area is important for the conservation of *Inia geoffrensis*, which triggered criterion A1c. And for the conservation of two bird species: the Yapacana antbird, and the Orinoco softtail, which meet criterion B2.

Las Orquideas National Natural Park (ID 200940): This reassessment updated information on five bird species: Sharpe's wren, Chestnut wood-quail, Gold-ringed tanager, Black-and-gold tanager, and Red-bellied grackle, which meet criterion B3b.

Black-and-gold tanager © Esteban Villa Restrepo

As part of an AZE project that focused on plant species qualifying under the A1e criterion, various sites were reassessed collaboratively by Instituto Humboldt and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI). These sites are now listed on the WDKBA.

Yariguies Mountain Range (ID 14451): This is a KBA/AZE for two plant species, *Magnolia betuliensis* (A1e) and *Magnolia resupinatifolia* (criteria A1a, A1e and B1).

Paramos de Guantiva y la Rusia Distritos Regionales de Manejo Integrado (ID 14504): This is a KBA/AZE for a plant species, *Erythroxylum riverae*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Laguna de La Cocha (ID 19079): This is a KBA/AZE for a plant species, *Critoniopsis franciscana*, which triggers criterion A1e.

San Antonio Forest/Km 18 (ID 19130): This is a KBA/AZE for a plant species, *Elaeagia barbata*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Bosques, Mármoles y Pantágoras (ID 100126): This is a KBA/AZE for a plant species, *Trichilia deminuta*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Santa Cecilia (ID 100298): This is a KBA/AZE for a plant species, *Matisia carderi*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Pacurita Chocó Central (ID 200543): This is a KBA/AZE for two plant species, *Sloanea loquitoi* and *Sloanea pseudogranulosa*, which trigger criterion A1e.

Magnolia resupinatifolia © Miguel Angel Gomez

A Key Step for Biodiversity: Honduras Launches KBA Update Process

Author: Alex M. Cubas-Rodriguez, Aves Honduras

Photos courtesy of: Aves Honduras

Representation from different institutions in the country such as Aves Honduras, UNAH, El Zamorano, BICA, INCEBIO, WCS, among others, during the first day of the workshop.

On June 25, a historic moment was marked for biodiversity conservation in Honduras with the official launch of the process to update the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). This initiative, led by Aves Honduras, with technical support from BirdLife International and funding from the Government of Canada through the Conserva Aves program, held its first National Workshop from June 25 to 27 in Tegucigalpa.

The event featured the active participation of more than 30 guests, including a notable representation of Honduran taxonomic experts from various disciplines such as botany, mastozoology, entomology, and herpetology, among others. This diversity of voices and knowledge was key to strengthening the scientific and participatory approach of the process.

This effort is executed at the national level by Aves Honduras, in coordination with the Government of Honduras through three leading institutions: the Secretariat of Natural Resources and Environment (SERNA), through its General Directorate of Biodiversity (DIBIO); the Forest Conservation Institute (ICF), through the Directorates of Wildlife and Protected Areas; and the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG), through the administrative authority of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

This alliance was joined by non-governmental organizations such as the Foundation for Research and Conservation of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (INCEBIO), Panthera, and the Bay Islands Conservation Association (BICA), as well as prestigious academic institutions such as the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) and Zamorano University.

Likewise, the valuable participation of representatives from the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras (CONPAH) was present, allowing the incorporation of the vision of Indigenous Peoples in this national conservation

effort. Members of the national coordination groups also participated, strengthening the technical, strategic, and governance components of the initiative.

The workshop was facilitated by three outstanding international specialists in the KBA methodology: Gabriela Toscano, Cecilia Tobar, and Sofía Monsalve, who trained the participants on the technical criteria, tools, and evaluation processes needed to identify the most important areas for the conservation of threatened species and critical ecosystems in Honduran territory.

This initiative is part of the global commitment assumed by Honduras through the Kunming-Montreal Agreement on Biodiversity, adopted in 2022 during COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This agreement establishes concrete goals to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, including the protection of 30% of the planet's lands and seas, the respect for traditional knowledge, and the strengthening of local participation.

Aves Honduras staff together with BirdLife experts, from left to right: Francis Cáceres, Alex M. Cubas-Rodríguez, Kendy Doblado, Sophia Monsalve, Gabriela Toscano, Cecilia Tobar, Evelyn Rivera, and Sandy Pereira.

KBAs are internationally important sites, scientifically identified for hosting unique or threatened species, ecosystems, and ecological processes. These areas not only represent critical refuges for biodiversity but also guide conservation actions, land-use planning, and environmental funding. In Honduras, KBAs are being updated based on global scientific criteria, integrating technical knowledge and community wisdom to ensure the protection of the most vital sites in the country.

Nely González / (CONPAH)

> *"The full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the process of implementing the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) is fundamental because of our intrinsic relationship with nature. For millennia, we have had a deep understanding of the ecosystems we inhabit and all their species. Our worldview, based on balance and harmony with nature, has allowed the preservation of numerous species, many of which are key to the functioning of ecosystems.*
>
> *Our participation from CONPAH in the KBA workshop has been very meaningful because it allows us to combine our traditional practices and knowledge with scientific knowledge for biodiversity conservation."*

Meeting of the national coordination groups of experts.

This effort seeks to strengthen local governance in key territories such as La Mosquitia, one of the biologically richest regions of the country.

Alongside the formation of a National Biodiversity Expert Group and the strengthening of conservation strategies with territorial focus and multisectoral participation, Honduras positions itself as a country committed to the protection of its natural heritage. This is an opportunity to consolidate a network of actors from communities to scientific institutions working together for a more sustainable future, under principles of equity, ecological restoration, and responsible use of natural resources.

From left to right: Andrés Reyes, representative of PANCAM; Angie Tinoco, representative of BICA; and Arles García, representative of the UMA of Roatán.

From left to right: Claudia Guerrero, Mario Solís, Cecilia Tobar, Andrés Reyes, David Medina, Alex Cubas, and Ramon Melgar.

With this first workshop, Honduras takes a firm step toward the identification and validation of its KBAs and actively joins the world map of priority areas for life.

Read the article in Spanish here.

OCEANIA

KBA
KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

Papua New Guinea's KBA Network Strengthens

Huon Peninsula © Moss

As part of an AZE project that focused on tree species qualifying under the A1e criterion, various sites in Papua New Guinea were reassessed and are now listed on the WDKBA. This is part of the global tree assessment carried out by Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI).

Ekuti (ID 26351): This is a KBA/AZE for a tree species, *Metrosideros ovata*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Gwabadik (ID 26359): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Ficus boanensis*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Hagen - Giluwe (ID 26360): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Cryptocarya alticola*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Hiri (ID 26362): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Cupaniopsis acuticarpa*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Huon Peninsula (ID 26364): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Macaranga lineata*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Kamiali (ID 26368): This site holds the only known population of three Critically Endangered tree species *Rhodamnia kamialiensis*, *Rhodomyrtus takeuchii*, and *Xanthomyrtus splendens*, which trigger criterion A1e.

Markham (ID 26376): This site holds the only known populations of the tree species that trigger the A1e criterion, *Myristica pygmaea* and *Syzygium leptophlebium*.

Maza Terrestrial (ID 26379): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Cryptocarya darusensis*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Northern Misima (ID 26393): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Dolicholobium longifructum* and *Hunga longifolia*, thus triggering the A1e criterion.

Prince Alexandra Range (ID 26399): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Ptychosperma pullenii*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Rossel Island (ID 26401): This site holds the only known populations of seven tree species that trigger the A1e criterion, *Calophyllum acutiputamen*, *Myristica incredibilis*, *Myristica ovicarpa*, *Rosselia*

bracteata, *Beilschmiedia rosseliana*, *Cryptocarya tesselata*, and *Ptychosperma ramosissimum.*

Star Mountains (ID 26406): This site holds the only known populations of the Critically Endangered tree species *Cryptocarya dipterocarpifolia*, *Cyrtostachys bakeri*, and *Eurya ryozoana*, which trigger the A1e criterion.

Tonda (ID 26410): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Casearia brassii*, triggering criterion A1e.

West Torricelli Mountains (ID 26423): This site holds the only known populations of the Critically Endangered tree species *Calyptrocalyx laxiflorus* and *Ptychosperma buabe*, triggering criterion A1e.

Yapsei (ID 26424): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Endiandra djamuensis*, which triggers criterion A1e.

Kiriwina (ID 29784): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species *Eumachia goodenoughiensis* and *Osmoxylon rectibrachiatum*, which trigger criterion A1e.

Buin (ID 31327): This is the sole location for two Critically Endangered trees, *Geniostoma trichosylum* and *Litsea buinensis*, triggering criterion A1e.

Cape St George (Last Corner) (ID 45021): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species, *Syzygium ovalifolium*, and so triggers the A1e criterion.

Gloucester Volcanics (ID 45028): The site contains the only known location for the Endangered tree *Guioa novobritannica*, which qualifies under the criterion A1e. The distribution of *Guioa novobritannica* is restricted to slopes near Mt Tangis, in the Casuarina rumphiana dominated montane forest at around 740m asl.

Rambutyo (ID 45042): This site holds the only known population of the Critically Endangered tree species, *Syzygium rambutyense*, which triggers criterion A1e.

AFRICA

KBA
KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

Serge Angali: Africa's new Regional Focal Point

Serge Angali is the new Regional Focal Point for Africa. He is a Wildlife ecologist, enthusiastic about the management of biodiversity data, GIS, and passionate about applying data science to advance conservation efforts, with a background in Protected Area Management.

Contact: sangali@keybiodiversityareas.org

Serge Angali is a biologist by training, holding a bachelor's degree from the University of Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He then pursued his master's studies at the Northeast Forestry University of Harbin in China, specializing in wildlife ecology. After graduation, Serge worked in the Research and Biomonitoring unit at Lomako-Yokokala faunal Reserve, to support ongoing ecological monitoring activities with trap cameras, data collection and management; supported by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) in the DRC.

He then moved to the Ape Institute, where he was responsible for meticulously managing the workflow of the IUCN APES database Program, including data identification, requests, processing, formatting, and archiving. Enhance the effectiveness of database tools and services to ensure the data is comprehensive and accurate. He communicates effectively with data owners and data providers, including various conservation organizations.

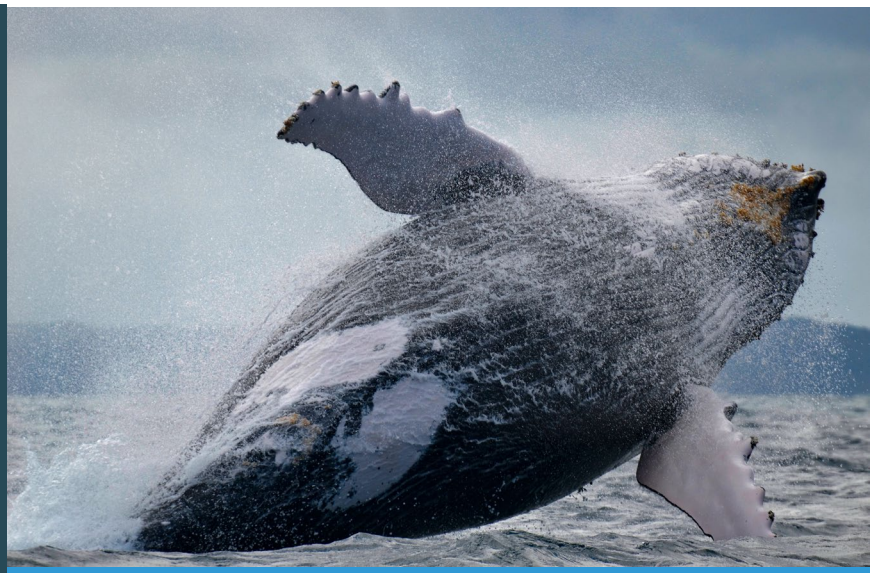
As the KBA Regional Focal Point, Serge is responsible for facilitating and encouraging the formation of Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) National Coordination Groups (NCGs) within countries and for supporting the process of formally proposing KBAs led by KBA NCGs and other independent proposers.

Serge is a Wildlife ecologist, enthusiastic about the management of biodiversity data, GIS, and passionate about applying data science to advance conservation efforts, with a background in Protected Area Management.

Madagascar : Tendro Atsimon'ny Nosy Officially Confirmed as New Marine Key Biodiversity Area

Author: GEF6-MPAs Madagascar

Since its inception in 2021, the GEF6-MPA project of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) has set itself the goal of identifying at least 2,500,000 hectares of marine and coastal KBAs in Madagascar. To date, the project has not only achieved this objective, but has far exceeded it, having identified 4,630,905 hectares of marine and coastal KBAs, including 09 updated and 03 new KBA sites.



The humpback whale, one of the iconic species of KBAs in Madagascar. Photo by Cétamada.

Madagascar marks a significant milestone in marine conservation with the official recognition of the Tendro Atsimon'ny Nosy site (ID201482) as the island's largest marine and coastal Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). Covering more than 17,000 km², this designation by the KBA Secretariat represents a major step forward for the protection of Madagascar's marine and coastal biodiversity.

This designation is the result of methodical work carried out by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD) through the GEF6-MPA Program, financed by the Global Environment Facility and executed by WWF.

Trigger Species and Identification Process

The approach for identifying this KBA was based on the Guidelines for the Use of a Global Standard for Identifying Key Biodiversity Areas (IUCN, 2023), ensuring objective and transparent identification. The process involved creating an exhaustive database on marine and coastal species and ecosystems, gathering crucial information from scientists, Protected Area managers, research institutions, and environmental organizations.

The analysis of data thresholds and criteria was complemented by national and regional workshops, essential for the validation and delimitation of sites. This assessment resulted in the updating of nine existing marine and coastal KBA sites and the identification of three new KBA sites, consolidating their status as marine areas contributing significantly to the persistence of global biodiversity.

These identifications were made possible by the presence of key species such as the humpback whale (Megaptera novaeangliae), the whale shark (Rhynchodon typus), the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (Sousa plumbea), and birds like the Madagascar egret (Ardeola idae), which served as triggers for the designation of these areas.

Four KBA Sites Awaiting Designation

The confirmation of Tendro Atsimon'ny Nosy paves the way for enhanced protection and targeted management initiatives for these vital ecosystems. Four other marine and coastal KBA sites—Tandavandriva Nosy Be Baie de Tsimipaika, Baie d'Antongil, Nosy Boraha Sainte-Marie Island, Paysage Harmonieux Protégé Ankivonjy, and

Complexe Mahavavy Kinkony—have already been validated and nominated by the KBA Africa Regional Focal Point and are awaiting final confirmation by the KBA Secretariat. The remaining KBAs are currently being reassessed and relaunched.

These identified KBAs are fundamental to Madagascar's conservation and sustainable development policy. They contribute directly to achieving Target No. 3 of the new 2022 Global Biodiversity Framework, which aims to conserve at least 30% of the country's marine and terrestrial territory by 2030, through Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

Establishment of the KBA National Coordination Group in Côte d'Ivoire: A Strategic Step for Biodiversity Conservation

Photos by: SOS-Forêts

On October 17, 2025, the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition of Côte d'Ivoire, in collaboration with SOS-Forêts, organised a workshop at the CIAPOL conference room in Abidjan to officialise the formation of Côte d'Ivoire's KBA National Coordination Group (KBA NCG). This initiative marks a major milestone in consolidating the country's efforts to conserve its rich biodiversity, particularly in the places where it's most needed.

The workshop was officially opened by Dr. Jeanne N'TAIN, Director General of Environment and representative of the Minister of Environment, who emphasized the urgent need to protect Côte d'Ivoire's biodiversity under increasing threats of degradation. She highlighted the government's commitments at national and international levels and welcomed the establishment of the KBA NCG as a strategic tool for inclusive environmental governance.

A broad coalition of participants attended the workshop, including representatives from ministries, government agencies, private sector organisations, scientific research institutions, civil society, and international organisations. The diverse participation underscored the workshop's comprehensive approach and the importance of multisectoral engagement in biodiversity conservation.

Dr. Kamelan Tanoh Marius, Executive Director of SOS-Forêts, presented the concept and strategic importance of KBAs, outlining the roles, missions, and functioning of the KBA NCG. He stressed that the committee would serve as the central coordinating body for the management and protection of KBAs in Côte d'Ivoire. His presentation also included lessons learned from the establishment of similar committees in other African countries, emphasising the importance of stakeholder integration and capacity building.

In a collaborative decision-making process, the participants unanimously agreed on the formal creation of the National Coordination Group.

The group will be presided over by the Minister of Environment, with SOS-Forêts serving as the secretariat executive. All attending structures and organisations working on biodiversity were invited to designate their representatives as committee members. Dr. Kamelan Tanoh Marius was unanimously appointed Coordinator of the KBA NCG for a renewable term of three years from the ministerial decree signing.

A validated roadmap was adopted, outlining key priorities: securing official ministerial creation documents, identifying and integrating additional stakeholders into the committee, mobilising financial resources, and strengthening the capacities of national actors involved in biodiversity conservation.

Dr Kamelan Marius presents the KBA NCG's role, mission, and functions.

Southern African Workshop Advances Key Biodiversity Area Assessments in Namibia

Author: Keenan Meissenheimer, BirdLife South Africa

Photo courtesy of BirdLife South Africa

A southern African regional Key Biodiversity Assessments workshop was held in Windhoek, Namibia in early November. The workshop forms part of the Spatial Biodiversity Assessment Prioritisation and Planning (SBAPP) regional project, which is funded by the Agence Française de Développement and the Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial. The project aims to develop and enhance national spatial biodiversity assessments, prioritisation and planning processes and products in four southern African countries (Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa) in order to strengthen the national knowledge base on biodiversity; and ensure this knowledge informs land use planning and decision making, assists with the development of environmental policy and strategies, and provides a basis for future biodiversity monitoring.

This workshop took place during the fourth project year of the SBAPP Regional Project and was hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), in partnership with several institutions, including the Namibia University of Science & Technology (NUST), the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and BirdLife South Africa (BLSA). The workshop is a regional platform for collaboration and capacity building amongst the SBAPP Regional Project countries about the identification and management of KBAs.

The workshop was held in Namibia as this country has recently established a KBA National Coordination Group (NCG) and is now embarking on the process of assessing sites to see whether they qualify as areas of particular importance for biodiversity for a wide range of species and ecosystems based on the KBA Standard. Dr Charlotte Boyd and Dr Lize von Staden gave an overview of the KBA standard and how KBAs are used globally. The head of the KBA Secretariat, Andy Plumptre, explained the role of a National Coordination Group, and the importance of managing the KBA process at a national level. Serge Angali, Regional Focal Point for Africa and Francophone countries, gave a presentation on the KBA proposal process and the WDKBA. An important outcome from the workshop was a broadly agreed roadmap for KBA assessment in Namibia, informed by experience from other countries within the region. The workshop led to the selection of government chair and WWF co-chair for the NCG. The NCG will likely form subcommittees based on taxonomic groups with coordinators that will reach out to experts.

MIDDLE EAST

KBA
KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

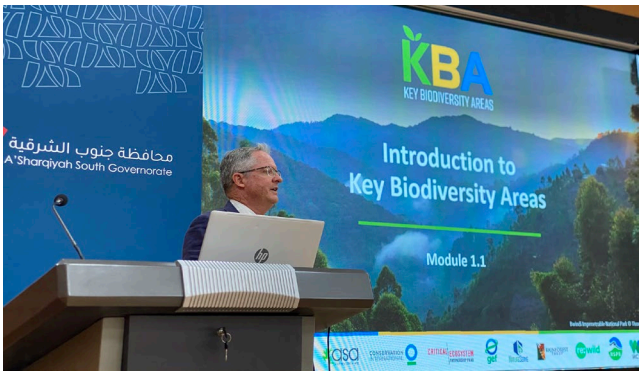
Oman initiates the National Process for the Identification and Updating of Key Biodiversity Areas

Author: Oman's KBA National Coordination Group

Photos courtesy of: Ahmed Al-Shikili, Environment Authority

- Launch of Oman's national KBA identification process.
- Establishment of a National Coordination Group (NCG).
- Participation of key local institutions and international experts.
- Emphasis on Oman's rich biodiversity and globally significant species.
- First KBA workshop held in Sur city, Oman, July 2024.

The Sultanate of Oman, through its Environment Authority, has officially launched the process of identifying and update Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) across the country. This initiative aims to systematically recognize sites of global importance for the persistence of biodiversity and to guide future conservation priorities. The process aligns with international best practices and supports Oman's commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.



As part of this national effort, a National Coordination Group (NCG) has been established to provide scientific and technical oversight for the KBA process. The group includes representatives and experts from governmental and non-governmental bodies in different fields. These bodies include Environment Authority, Oman Botanic Garden, Oman Environmental Society, Centre for Environmental studies and research at Sultan Qaboos University, Ministry of Agriculture, Oman National Museum and Nizwa university. The process is further supported by collaboration with the KBA Secretariat and other international biodiversity experts.

Oman's biodiversity is remarkably rich and distinct, shaped by a convergence of ecological zones and a range of habitats from deserts and mountains to wetlands and marine ecosystems. The country hosts several iconic and endemic species, such as the Arabian leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*), critically endangered and surviving in the Dhofar Mountains; the Arabian oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*),

reintroduced successfully in central Oman; and the Arabian tahr (*Arabitragus jayakari*), endemic to the Hajar Mountains. In addition, Oman's coastal zones support globally significant nesting sites of four different species of turtles: the endangered Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), the Olive Ridley Turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), the Loggerhead Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), and the critically endangered Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). These coastal areas also host diverse marine life, including dolphins, whales—such as the rare Arabian humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), observed only around 100 times in the region—and vibrant coral reef ecosystems that thrive along Oman's extensive coastline.

The KBA identification process was launched during a national workshop held in Sur city, Oman, in July 2025. This workshop brought together over 30 participants from government agencies, research institutions, stakeholders and NGOs. The meeting introduced the KBA methodology, outlined key responsibilities, and initiated discussions on potential KBA sites based on available biodiversity data and expert knowledge. Participants emphasized the need for high-quality spatial data, taxonomic expertise, and stakeholder engagement to ensure a robust and inclusive process.

By embarking on the KBA identification journey, Oman is making a strategic investment in science-based conservation planning. The outcomes will inform protected area expansion, environmental impact assessments, land-use planning, and other national biodiversity initiatives. Moreover, the process strengthens collaboration among institutions and provides a platform for sharing data, knowledge, and conservation success stories.

With strong political support, scientific leadership, and community involvement, Oman's KBA initiative will contribute meaningfully to global biodiversity conservation while ensuring the protection of the nation's natural heritage for future generations.

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Head of the KBA Secretariat – Andy Plumptre: aplumptre@keybiodiversityareas.org

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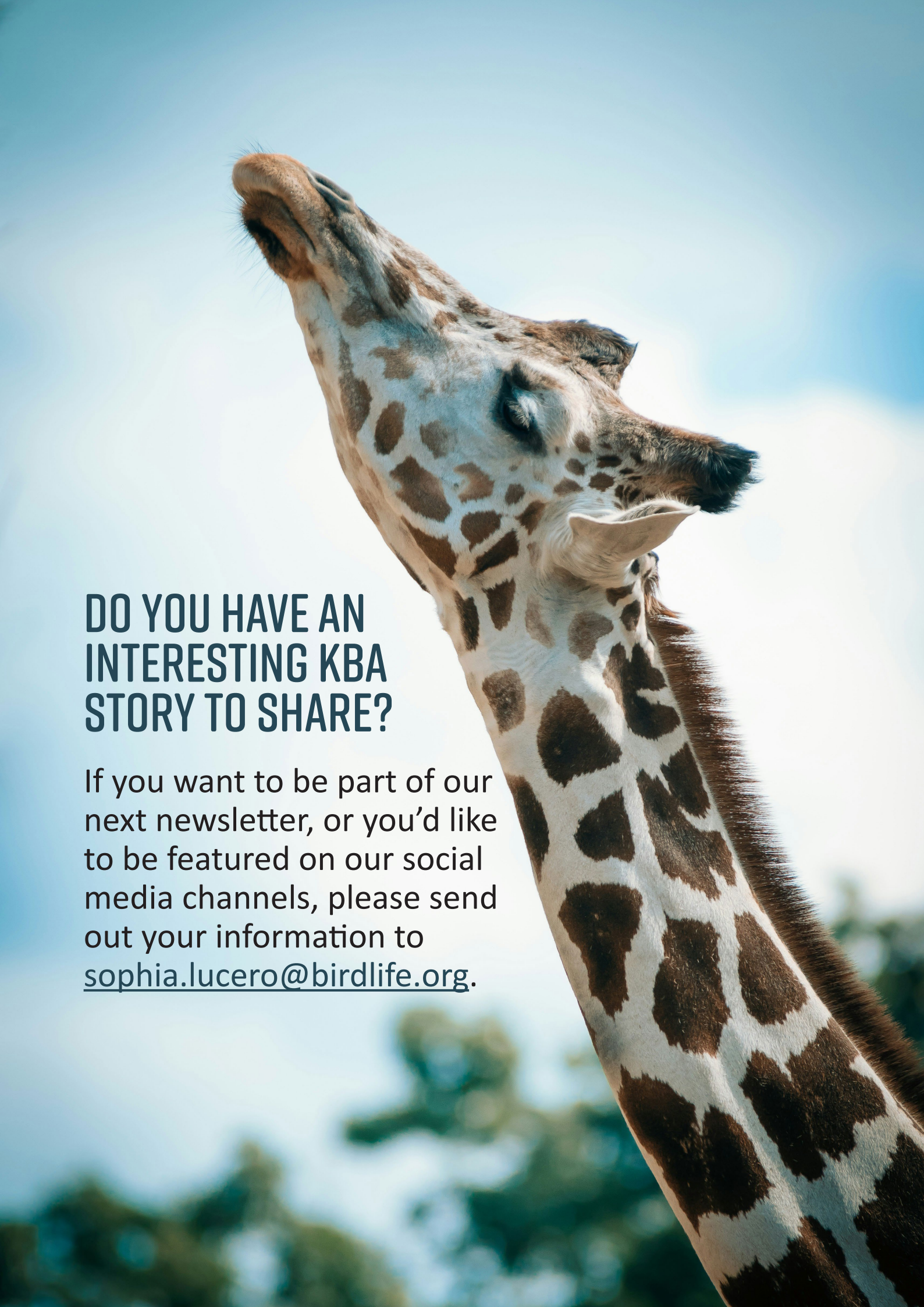
Layout and design - Sophia Lucero: sophia.lucero@birdlife.org



DO YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING KBA STORY TO SHARE?

If you want to be part of our next newsletter, or you'd like to be featured on our social media channels, please send out your information to sophia.lucero@birdlife.org.

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Chelonia mydas © Jon Lape