

# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

## Issue 20

**KBA**  
KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS



Numerius tahitiensis © Christopher Lindsey

KBA PARTNERS:



# HIGHLIGHTS FOR THIS ISSUE

<b>Global</b> .....	<b>4</b>
The World’s Most Important Sites for Nature: The First Global Review of Key Biodiversity Areas.....	5
New Online Course Shows How Countries Can Use Key Biodiversity Areas to Achieve Global Biodiversity Goals .....	7
Key Updates and New Sites in the March 2026 WDKBA Update .....	8
If Amphibians Inhabit Your Landscapes, This Magazine Is for You.....	10
High prevalence of traded bird species in Key Biodiversity Areas .....	12
IUCN hosted the Key Biodiversity Areas Steering Committee at its headquarters in Gland, Switzerland .....	14
KBAs now in Google Earth Engine.....	14
Latest KBA publications .....	15
KBAs in the news .....	15
<b>Africa</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Restoring Mwanza Gulf KBA: Community-Led Removal of Invasive <i>Salvinia</i> spp. in Lake Victoria ....	17
First Global KBAs Recognised in Lake Tanganyika .....	18
Beyond the pot: the invaluable socioecological potential of Key Biodiversity areas (KBAs) on Lake Tanganyika .....	19
Madagascar: 6 Marine and Coastal KBA Sites Confirmed Under the IUCN Standard, Covering More Than 3 Million Hectares.....	20
Kenya Steps Forward in Advancing the Key Biodiversity Areas Process .....	21
<b>South America</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Adapting TESSA for KBA site management: Co-designing climate-resilient Nature-based Solutions in Ecuador .....	24
Globally Threatened Pampas Meadowlarks ( <i>Lesites defilippii</i> ) are back at a critical breeding site within the “Campos de El Tapado” KBA in northern Uruguay .....	27
<b>North America</b> .....	<b>29</b>
KBA Canada reaches 400 KBA milestone and releases their 2025 Annual Report.....	30
<b>Europe</b> .....	<b>32</b>
A key step toward updating KBA networks across Europe .....	33
<b>KBA Community Representatives</b> .....	<b>35</b>

# CONNECT & SHARE: JOIN THE NEW KBA COMMUNITY HUB

The KBA Community is moving! Join us on our new KBA Discourse, to chat directly with the KBA team and share your insights.

Sign up today [here!](#)



# GLOBAL



## The World's Most Important Sites for Nature: The First Global Review of Key Biodiversity Areas



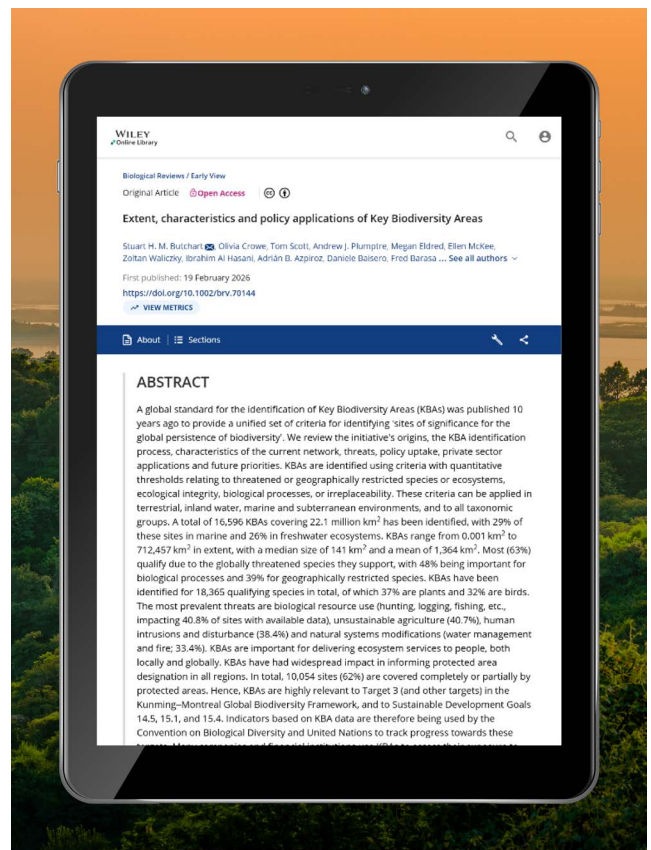
Yellow-headed Manakin © David Monroy R

A new study reveals that with 16,596 sites identified worldwide — spanning 22.1 million km<sup>2</sup> and supporting more than 18,000 species — the KBA network now represents the most comprehensive global map of places critical for biodiversity.

In 2016, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) published the *Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas*. This landmark document provides a unified set of criteria for identifying 'sites of significance for the global persistence of biodiversity'. Now, almost ten years on, a [newly published paper](#) synthesises the lessons learned and outcomes of applying the global standard. It also documents the scale, characteristics, policy uptake, and future priorities of the KBA network.

The origins of KBAs can be traced back to the 1970s, when the notion of Important Bird Areas was used to map key places for birds. Over time, similar initiatives emerged for plants, freshwater systems, butterflies, and other taxa. However, to respond to the increasing need for a globally unified standard, KBAs were born. With them, the KBA Partnership<sup>1</sup> was formed with the goal of ensuring the correct application of the standard and the expansion of the KBA network.

By 2024, the KBA network expanded as many countries comprehensively assessed their sites — a staggering 16,596 sites, covering 22.1 million square kilometres, were identified. These KBAs stretch from tropical rainforests to coral reefs, spanning terrestrial, freshwater, marine and even subterranean systems. Based on the KBA criteria, most sites (63%) qualify because they support globally threatened species, and nearly half (48%) are important for biological processes such as large congregations or migration.



KBAs have been identified as significant for 18,365 species — from plants and birds to amphibians, fishes, invertebrates and mammals. These are also crucial for human persistence. The array of ecosystems within them provides important contributions to people: climate mitigation, freshwater provision and purification, flood mitigation, coastal protection, tourism, and cultural identity.

The study shows that the identification of these sites is key, but only the first step. To ensure KBAs are conserved, the current pressures affecting them need to be addressed. One of the major threats affecting these sites is biological resource use (impacting 40.8% of these sites), followed by agricultural expansion and intensification (40.7%), human intrusions and disturbance (38.4%), and natural systems modifications (33.4%). Deriving from these threats, deforestation remains a major concern — terrestrial KBAs have lost on average 8.2% of their tree cover between 2001 and 2020, with accelerating rates in many regions.

Effective conservation and management of KBAs is also essential. Coverage has increased steadily since 2000. As of 2024, 62% of KBAs overlap at least partially with protected areas (PAs) or other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and 20% are fully covered, with the highest proportion of the latter in Europe and Africa. However, many KBAs still lack adequate management. Fewer than half of monitored KBAs have management plans, and only about one-third have substantive conservation measures being implemented.

To improve conservation and management of important sites for biodiversity, KBAs are increasingly being used as a tool for prioritisation. These have become widely recognised and used in policy and practice, including by multilateral environmental agreements like the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)<sup>2</sup> and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 14.5, 15.1, and 15.4. Also, they are used by businesses to assess and disclose nature-

related risks; by financial institutions and donors to prioritise investment; and by governments and non-governmental organisations to prioritise conservation actions.



Despite the progress achieved in the last decade, the study pinpoints the priorities and challenges for the next one. Among the priorities are the aim of completing and updating assessments in under-studied regions, expanding the application of ecosystem-based and irreplaceability criteria, strengthening monitoring systems and securing long-term financing for site-level conservation. There is also the goal of supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities who steward many KBAs, and ensuring effective protection and restoration, not just formal designation.

The KBA initiative has succeeded in pinpointing the places that matter most for biodiversity conservation. The challenge now lies in ensuring that these important places are not only identified but also safeguarded for generations to come.

**1.** The KBA Partnership is formed by 13 conservation organisations. Their collaboration aims to strengthen global conservation efforts by systematically mapping and safeguarding the planet's most important sites for biodiversity.

**2.** Specifically, Target 3 of the KMGBF: Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed.

# New Online Course Shows How Countries Can Use Key Biodiversity Areas to Achieve Global Biodiversity Goals

**Author:** Samridhi Rijal, KBA Secretariat

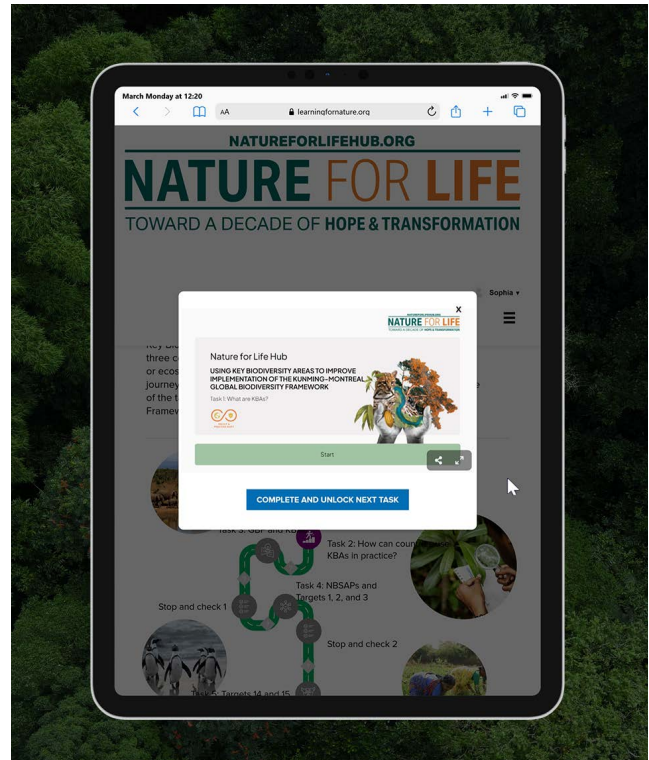
In response to the pressing issues affecting nature, countries around the world are working to translate global biodiversity commitments into concrete national action. To support this journey, the UNDP has launched its new Nature for Life Hub, a year-round capacity-building platform designed to provide the practical tools and knowledge required to walk towards a nature-positive future. As part of this effort, the platform hosts a new KBA-focused online learning journey to help decision-makers understand where to focus their efforts — and how Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) can support implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

The course titled, [Using Key Biodiversity Areas to Improve Implementation of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), explains how integrating KBAs into national planning can help countries deliver on six GBF targets (Targets 1, 2, 3, 14, 15 and 21). These are spatial planning, restoration, protected and conserved areas, biodiversity mainstreaming, corporate accountability, and knowledge-sharing, respectively. Target three includes the headline “30x30” target to protect 30 percent of land and sea by 2030.



White ruffed lemur from Madagascar © Anthony/Unsplash

KBAs are globally significant sites for species and ecosystems, identified using a rigorous scientific standard. Because they pinpoint the places that matter most for biodiversity, they provide a



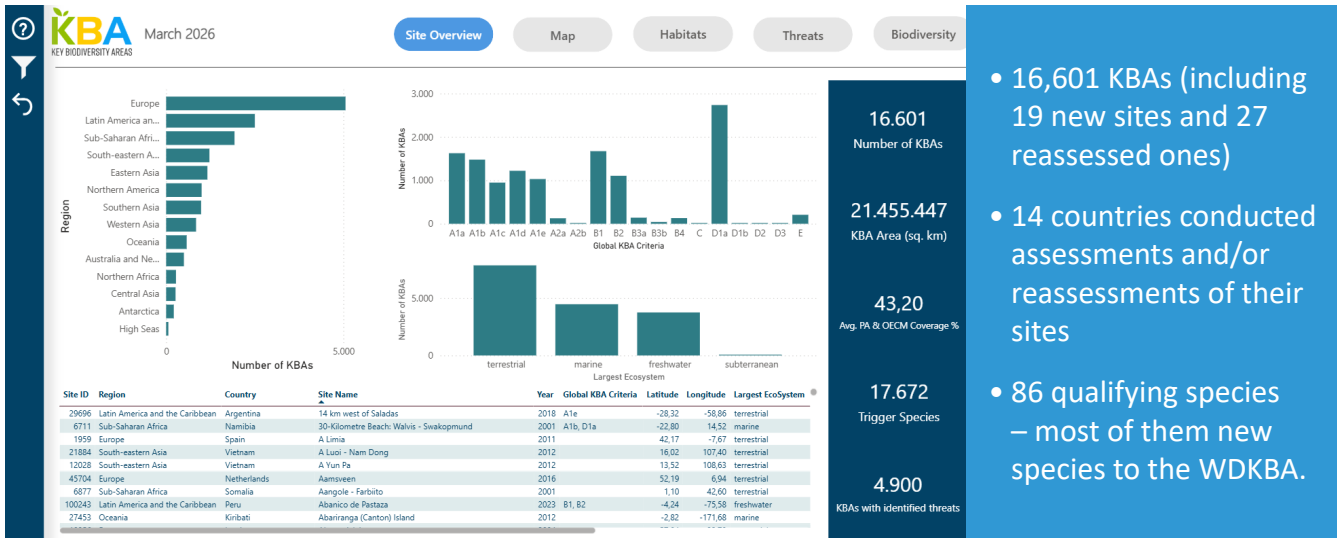
practical foundation which can be used to prioritise conservation action, strengthen safeguards, and align development decisions with biodiversity goals. Some KBAs have already been identified, at least in part, in nearly every country worldwide.

This course demonstrates how KBA data can be incorporated into National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), inform land-use and restoration priorities, support biodiversity finance, and strengthen environmental risk screening. It also explains how KBAs are recognised within major international safeguard frameworks and how tools such as the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) can help integrate KBA data into planning and reporting processes.

Designed for policymakers, planners, conservation practitioners, and finance professionals, this course provides practical guidance on using site-level biodiversity data to accelerate national implementation of global commitments.

**To access the full course, click [here](#).**

# Key Updates and New Sites in the March 2026 WDKBA Update

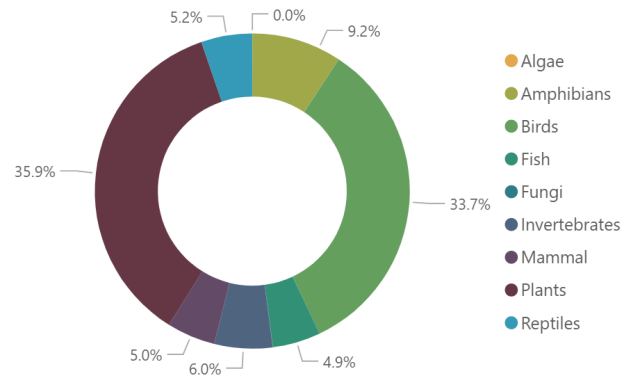


The latest update of the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas [WDKBA](#) is now live. As of March 2026, the number of sites is a staggering 16,601 KBAs, including 19 brand new sites, and 27 previously existing KBAs that were reassessed since the last update in September 2025. Also, 3 sites were superseded having been replaced by some of the assessed or reassessed sites, and 17 legacy sites were delisted as KBAs. The boundaries of a further 19 sites were improved either to align them with protected areas, habitats, or other topography as appropriate and in consultation with the original proposers.

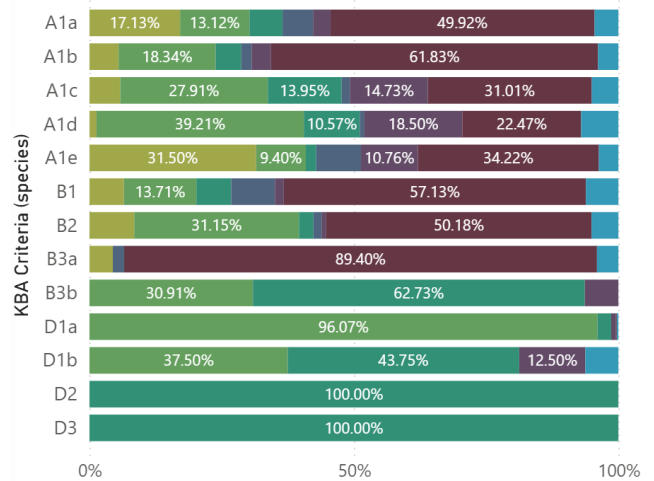
## Biodiversity updates

In terms of biodiversity, 86 species triggered the KBA Criteria – most of them are new to the WDKBA. With these new additions, the total number of qualifying species rises to 17,672, with plants as the most numerous group with 6,343 species, representing 35.9% of the total number of qualifying species. They are followed by birds and amphibians, with 5,960 and 1,631 qualifying species, respectively. The remaining species are invertebrates (1,054), reptiles (925), mammals (880) and fish (870).

Distinct species triggering KBA Criteria (incl. Legacy)



Global KBA Criteria composition by taxonomic group



## Expansion of KBA national networks

The numbers in this update reflect the work and efforts to expand national KBA networks in 14 countries across various regions: Canada, Papua New Guinea, Mexico, Colombia, China (mainland), DR Congo, Guatemala, Zambia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Madagascar, Solomon Islands, Uzbekistan, and Vanuatu.

## Sensitive sites



Summary data for all KBAs can be accessed on the [KBA website's dashboard](#), site search and map search, in the "Explore Data" section. However, locations of sensitive sites remain hidden to protect trigger species found at these sites, which face potential threats like poaching and other human related activities. For more information on sensitive sites, see [here](#).

## First four KBAs for Lake Tanganyika



Lake Tanganyika is an African Great Lake shared by Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Zambia. The recognition of its first four KBAs is a crucial step for the protection of its biodiversity. The newly confirmed sites are: (1) Mutambala–Nembe River Bay, and (2) Shore Northeast of Katanga/Mt Kabobo in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and (3) Cameron Bay, and (4) Mpulungu in Zambia. For more information on the proposal of these sites, read this [related story](#).

## If Amphibians Inhabit Your Landscapes, This Magazine Is for You

**Author:** Amphibian Survival Alliance



- A new open-access [digital magazine](#) from The Amphibian Survival Alliance
- Field reports, practical tools, news, and conservation resources written by and for practitioners
- Issue 1 features contributors from five continents, from Ecuador to Borneo to Papua New Guinea
- Open to contributions from the broader conservation community, including KBA practitioners and site managers

If you work in a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), chances are you already know your amphibians. You've factored them into assessments, monitored their populations, watched them respond to the same pressures affecting everything else at your site. What you may not have is a place to share that work with practitioners facing the same challenges in a different landscape, on a different continent, often without the resources or networks you've built.

That's why The Amphibian Survival Alliance created [AmphiBios](#).

### A Shared Space for Practical Conservation

AmphiBios ([amphibios.app](#)) is a free, open-access digital magazine from [The Amphibian Survival Alliance](#) (ASA), that is designed around a simple idea: conservation doesn't happen in a void. The best field insights, monitoring approaches, and hard-won lessons tend to live in project reports and institutional files, seen by funders and forgotten by everyone else. AmphiBios is where that knowledge travels further.

Inside, you'll find field reports from practitioners working across all regions, practical tools and

methodologies that cross taxonomic boundaries, and honest accounts from conservationists writing about the work as they actually experience it. Survey frameworks adaptable to multi-taxa KBA assessments. Disease mitigation strategies relevant well beyond amphibians. Habitat management approaches tested in the field, not the abstract.

If it's useful to a practitioner, it belongs in AmphiBios.



### Your Work Deserves a Wider Audience

Many KBA practitioners are generating exactly the kind of knowledge that other sites need. Monitoring data that reveals how amphibian populations

track broader ecosystem health. Integrating the wisdom of indigenous communities. Community engagement strategies that work across species groups. Conservation approaches refined through years of fieldwork that never make it into a format other practitioners can find.

AmphiBios is built for those stories. Not just the successes, but the honest accounts of what didn't go as planned and what you learned from it. That kind of knowledge is rare and valuable, and it shouldn't stay locked in a single site's filing system.



## Building Connections Across Landscapes

Through ASA's network of 90+ partner organizations across 36+ countries, and programs like the Future Leaders of Amphibian Conservation, AmphiBios connects practitioners across geographies and career stages. Early-career conservationists working in KBA landscapes can find mentorship, funding pathways, and a community invested in their growth. Experienced practitioners can reach the colleagues who need their insights most.

The amphibian conservation community is small enough to be personal and global enough to matter. AmphiBios makes it visible.



## Issue 1

The first issue publishes at the end of March 2026, with contributions from Ecuador, Borneo, Papua New Guinea, Madagascar, South Africa, and Panama. Five continents. Practitioners writing about real work in real places. No paywalls. No jargon walls.

## Contribute

AmphiBios welcomes feature articles up to 2,000 words, short communications up to 500, summaries of recently published research, and opportunities including funding calls and job postings. You don't need to be an amphibian specialist. If your work intersects with amphibian landscapes and you have something worth sharing, there's a place for it here.

Visit [amphibios.app](https://amphibios.app) for submission guidelines, or to read [Issue 1](#).



*The best conservation knowledge is the kind that moves. AmphiBios is here to help it travel.*

*The Amphibian Survival Alliance is a global partnership strengthening and consolidating the impact of effective conservation actions to mitigate and prevent amphibian declines. ASA is a proud partner of the Key Biodiversity Areas Partnership. Learn more at [amphibians.org](https://amphibians.org).*

# High prevalence of traded bird species in Key Biodiversity Areas

**Authors:** Oscar Morton and Tom Lansley

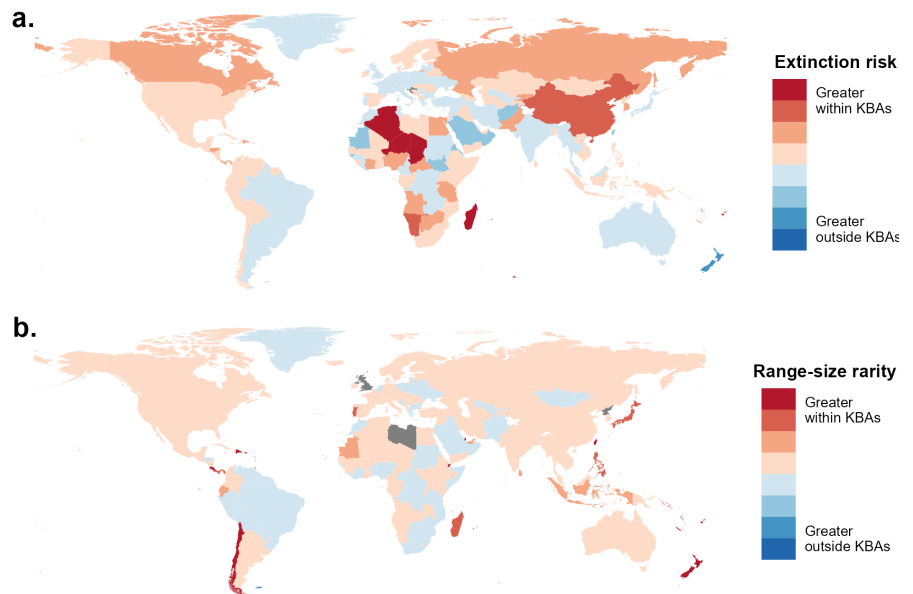


Bali Myna, *Leucopsar rothschildi*, West Bali National Park, Indonesia © JJ Harrison CC3.0

- On average there are more than twice as many traded or used bird species within KBAs than nontraded species.
- Global hotspots of richness, extinction risk, and range rarity for traded species disproportionately occur in KBAs.
- There is an urgent need to protect key sites and ensure that any use and trade of species within them are sustainable.

The use and trade of species is essential for hundreds of millions of livelihoods around the world and represents an industry worth billions. However, if poorly managed, such use and trade can rapidly become unsustainable, threatening both species and livelihoods. In a [new study](#) published in *Conservation Biology* we explored how well such species are represented in Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

**Figure 1.** National differences between traded bird species' (a) extinction risk, and (c) range-size rarity inside KBAs and within a 10-km buffer surrounding them.



## Importance for traded species

The most striking finding of our study is the sheer diversity of traded species potentially occurring within KBAs. While it is well known that KBAs are hotspots for biodiversity, the degree to which they harbour potentially used and traded species is remarkable. We find that on average, there are more than twice as many traded bird

species within KBAs than non-traded species. This is despite estimates that less than half of all bird species globally are currently thought to be in trade. This underscores that KBAs are not necessarily just biodiversity strongholds; they can also be active landscapes where human activities and species conservation are inextricably linked.

## Hotspots of Risk and Rarity

By design KBAs often specifically host threatened or small-ranged species. We found that for traded species, KBAs were disproportionately important relative to the areas immediately surrounding them for extinction risk (relatively high prevalence of threatened species) and range-size rarity (relatively large areas of habitat for small-ranged species). Thus KBAs also potentially identify areas where there is considerable pressure from biological resource use. Hotspots of extinction risk for traded species within KBAs include East Africa and South-east Asia, whereas hotspots for range-rarity are more widely distributed, but more common on islands and in tropical regions.

## Looking forward

There are 46 bird species that are specifically thought to be threatened by unsustainable use and trade, and have more than 50% of their global habitat within KBAs. For these species, the KBA network is critical in highlighting and prioritising their need for protection. Only 8 of these species also have sufficient habitat in formally protected areas such as the Bali myna (*Leucopsar*

*rothschildi*), and a further 8 species lack any habitat in protected areas. For these already threatened species, the formal recognition of KBAs as protected areas or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) is imperative. As we strive toward the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's Targets, including Target 3's '30x30', success must encompass how well we integrate sustainable management within these sites, protecting threatened bird species while respecting the vital human livelihoods that may have become an inseparable part of these landscapes.

This work clearly underscores that in many locales and contexts, area-based conservation efforts are likely intrinsically linked to the use and trade of species and consequently people's livelihoods. Ultimately, the success of conserving the species within these sites relies on sustainability and collaboration. The communities and organisations in and around KBAs, including BirdLife partners, must work together to produce and abide by robust policies that benefit both species and communities.

**Read the study [here](#).**

## KBAs now in Google Earth Engine

**Author:** Tom Scott, BirdLife International

KBAs are now available within the [Google Earth Engine Catalogue](#). Google's online platform combines access to a huge range of satellite imagery and spatial datasets with the power for users to complete complex, global-scale analyses. They will be maintained as a current version, with recent historical versions also available. Whilst publicly visible, the datasets can only be accessed by completing the relevant parts of the [KBA request form](#) on the website. Once completed, you will automatically be granted access within Earth Engine.

The screenshot shows the Earth Engine Data Catalog interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation tabs for Home, Categories, All Datasets, All Tags, Landsat, MODIS, Sentinel, Publisher, Community, and More. The main content area displays the 'WDKBA: World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) - September 2025' dataset. On the left is a map of South America with green and yellow areas indicating KBA locations. To the right of the map, the 'Dataset Availability' is listed as '2016-01-01T00:00:00Z-2025-09-01T00:00:00Z'. Below that, the 'Dataset Producer' is 'KBA Partnership' and the 'Dataset Processor' is 'BirdLife International'. An 'Earth Engine Snippet' is provided as a code block: `ee.FeatureCollection("projects/ee-kbas-in-gee/assets/current")`. On the far right, there are 'Tags' for biodiversity, boundaries, ecosystems, global, iucn, management, marine, oceans, and table.

## IUCN hosted the Key Biodiversity Areas Steering Committee at its headquarters in Gland, Switzerland

**Author:** Andrew Plumptre, Head of the KBA Secretariat

Between April 15 and 17, the KBA Partner members who sit on the KBA Committee met in person for the first time in three years (previous meetings were held online). This year marks the 10th anniversary of the KBA Partnership and KBA Programme, and this meeting provided a space to review progress against the KBA Strategic plan and its contribution to the Kunming-



Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It is clear that KBAs are becoming better recognised and used to guide conservation planning and actions across the world, but it was also recognised that there is still a need to raise awareness of KBAs and their value in several countries. A key area of discussion at the meeting was the renewal of the KBA Partnership Agreement, which is being re-tailored to encourage new institutions to join the KBA Partnership, with more equitable membership commitments dependent on the turnover of the institution.

The committee also reviewed the results of a questionnaire survey, completed by members

of the KBA Community about the application of the KBA criteria in the Global Standard for the Identification of KBAs. This provided really useful input from around the world, so thank you to all of you who responded to that questionnaire. The Global Standard will likely be opened to allow an update of some criteria based on these results. The questionnaire also asked about the need/interest in developing KBA regional criteria, and there was strong support to allow Regional KBAs to be identified. The KBA Standards and Appeals Committee will start a process to develop these and reach out to you for input and ideas later this year or next year.

# Latest KBA publications

**Extent, characteristics and policy applications of Key Biodiversity Areas**

Stuart H. M. Butchart, Olivia Crowe, Tom Scott, Andrew J. Plumptre, Megan Eddred, Ellen Mackey, Zoltan Walmoczy, Ibrahim Al Hasani, Adrián B. Azpiroz, Daniele Baisero, Fred Barosa, Alison E. Beresford, Bezzang S. Bezzang, Charlotte Boyd, Thomas M. Brooks, Graeme Buchanan, Gill Bunting, Sofia Capellan, Neil Cox, Tim R. B. Daversport, Tammy F. Davies, Gina Della Toga, Wendy Elliott, Matt Foster, Jon Gilbert, Jonathan M. Handley, Diego Juffe-Bignoli, Victoria R. Jones, Naomi Kingstone, Jeannot Kivuno, John Lamoreux, Penny F. Langhammer, James Lewis, Bruce Liggett, Daniel Marnowick, Paul Matiku, Erin McCrees, Rachel A. Neugarten, Catherine Numa, Mark O'Brien, Madhu Rao, Clara Raudsepp-Hearne, Justine C. Ray, Samrithi Rijal, Jon Paul Rodriguez, Jurgis Sapajanskas, Wes Sechrest, Martin Sneath, Andrew Snyder, Konstantina Spiliopoulou, Thomas Stames, Cecilia Tobar, Gautam Surya, Marcello F. Tognelli, Andrew W. Tordoff, Maria G. Toscano, Yongtun Trisurat, Amy Upgren

First published: 19 February 2026  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/birv.70144>

Read

**Prevalence of traded bird species in key biodiversity areas**

Oscar Morton, Tom Lansley, Stuart H. M. Butchart, Graeme M. Buchanan, David P. Edwards

First published: 30 March 2026  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/coobi.70277>

**Article impact statement:** Traded threatened and small-ranged species occur disproportionately in key biodiversity areas.

Read

**A SCOPING OF KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS ACROSS EUROPE**

D. BAISSERO & A.J. PLUMPTRE  
 KBA SECRETARIAT

Read

**Urban expansion and its impact on species ranges and Key Biodiversity Areas in Indonesia**

Abhi Chaturvedi, A. J. Plumptre, A. Baisero, G. Della Toga, M. Foster, J. Gilbert, J. Handley, D. Juffe-Bignoli, V. R. Jones, N. Kingstone, J. Kivuno, J. Lamoreux, P. F. Langhammer, J. Lewis, B. Liggett, D. Marnowick, P. Matiku, E. McCrees, R. A. Neugarten, C. Numa, M. O'Brien, M. Rao, C. Raudsepp-Hearne, J. C. Ray, S. Rijal, J. P. Rodriguez, J. Sapajanskas, W. Sechrest, M. Sneath, A. Snyder, K. Spiliopoulou, T. Stames, C. Tobar, G. Surya, M. F. Tognelli, A. W. Tordoff, M. G. Toscano, Y. Trisurat, A. Upgren

Read

# KBAs in the news

**Protect the environment**

Key Biodiversity Areas: Safeguarding the Planet's Most Irreplaceable Natural Sites

Ganesh Kholivada

Read

**The World's Most Important Sites for Nature**

The World's Most Important Sites for Nature

Read

**Série de Webinaires du Cameroun – Le processus de proposition des Zones Clés pour la Biodiversité (KBA) et la base de données WDKBA**

Objectifs de ce webinaire:

- Présenter le processus de proposition des Zones Clés pour la Biodiversité (KBA)
- Expliquer le fonctionnement de la base de données WDKBA
- Présenter une démonstration pratique de la saisie des données WDKBA
- Présenter les rapports générés par la WDKBA
- Répondre aux questions des participants sur les aspects techniques et opérationnels du processus

Read

**How one family's vision turned Osun forest into biodiversity hotspot**

In this report, DAYO DUYO writes on how a privately owned forest in Osun State is drawing global attention for its role in preserving biodiversity and offering...

Read

**Leonardo DiCaprio Praises Greece for Inserting Key Biodiversity Areas in Laws and Policies**

ATHENS—Actor and environmentalist Leonardo DiCaprio singled out Greece for praise in a post on his Instagram account on Friday for "leading the way" in using Key Biodiversity Areas in drafting laws and policy-making.

Read

**Report warns of rising threats on key biodiversity areas**

Submerged buildings by the rising waters of Lake Dobruja in Barings County on November 15, 2025. (The Standard)

Pressure is mounting across Kenya's key biodiversity areas as conservation efforts struggle to keep pace with rapid degradation.

Read

**Assessing Indonesia's Conservation Policy: Between Conservation Areas and Key Biodiversity Areas**

The launch of the Indonesian Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (ISBAP) 2025-2045 in August 2024 marks Indonesia's renewed commitment to conserving biodiversity. This document serves not only as a long-term strategic framework but also embodies a bold vision: maintaining ecological balance, integrating biodiversity into cultural identity, and ensuring that nature conservation proceeds hand in hand with economic growth and community well-being.

Read

**This is the story of Weda Bay - and how nature is being sacrificed for mining**

Analysis has found more than 3,000 mining operations within the most naturally precious areas of the planet, a much larger footprint than previously thought.

Read

# AFRICA



## Restoring Mwanza Gulf KBA: Community-Led Removal of Invasive *Salvinia* spp. in Lake Victoria

**Author:** Festus Massaho, Blue Victoria



- Over 1000 tonnes of invasive *Salvinia* spp. removed from Mwanza Gulf KBA
- Improved transport and fishing activities previously blocked by the invasive plant
- Strengthened multi-stakeholder collaboration with government and research institutions
- Protection of a Key Biodiversity Area and Important Bird Area (IBA)
- Ongoing efforts to ensure long-term ecosystem recovery

The [Mwanza Gulf](#) Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), an ecologically important part of Lake Victoria and also recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA), has been increasingly threatened by the rapid spread of invasive *Salvinia* species. These plants form dense floating mats that block sunlight, reduce oxygen levels, and disrupt aquatic ecosystems. In addition, the infestation severely affected transport systems and fishing activities, making it difficult for local communities to navigate and access fishing grounds.

According to research by Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute, *Salvinia* can triple in size within one week, making it one of the fastest-spreading invasive species in freshwater ecosystems. This rapid growth has made management efforts both urgent and challenging.

In response, Blue Victoria led a collaborative restoration effort, working with key institutions including National Environment Management Council, Lake Victoria Basin Water Board, Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority, and local government authorities from Misungwi and Sengerema Districts.

Through joint field operations and strong community participation, the initiative has successfully removed more than 1000 tonnes of *Salvinia* from affected areas. This has helped reopen water channels, restore fishing access, and improve habitat conditions for both aquatic species and bird populations.

The project has also strengthened community awareness on invasive species management and the importance of protecting freshwater ecosystems. The work is ongoing, with plans to scale up removal efforts and develop sustainable long-term control strategies.



Removing *Salvinia* © Shabani Mwita

## First Global KBAs Recognised in Lake Tanganyika

**Author:** Thomas Starnes, IUCN

The Lake Tanganyika KBAs were developed through several stakeholder workshops, including the Lake Tanganyika Conservation Science Workshop in Kigoma, Tanzania on 22 July 2022, on the shores of Lake Tanganyika © Nathaniel Robinson / TNC



The Lake Tanganyika basin—one of the world’s most evolutionarily important freshwater ecosystems—has taken a major step forward for global biodiversity conservation with the recognition of the **first four Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)** for the lake. These sites, developed through nearly a decade of collaborative scientific work, represent a landmark moment for safeguarding the thousands of unique and highly threatened species that make Lake Tanganyika an irreplaceable biodiversity hotspot.

The four KBAs—[Mutambala–Nembe River Bay](#) & [Shore Northeast of Katanga/Mt Kabobo](#) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and [Cameron Bay](#) & [Mpulungu](#) in Zambia—span sites of exceptional ecological value. Together, they capture critical spawning grounds, restricted range cichlids, pelagic breeding areas, and other ecological processes essential to maintaining the lake’s extraordinary fish diversity.

These proposals were the product of a multi year process involving the **Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA)**, the **Lake Tanganyika Science Advisory Group (LT SAG)**, national experts from all four riparian countries, and extensive species level reassessments under the IUCN Red List. Field confirmations of species presence, updated range maps, and newly documented reproductive units were central to meeting global KBA Standard requirements.

A particularly important highlight is that one of the sites qualifies as an **Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) site**, triggered by the entire known global population of the fish *Xenotilapia burtoni* occurring almost wholly within the proposed **Mutambala–Nembe River Bay KBA**. This makes the site internationally significant for preventing the extinction of a highly range restricted species.

The recognition of these first KBAs has been made possible through generous support from **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**, which initiated early delineation work and stakeholder consultations beginning in 2017. Subsequent refinement of the sites—through workshops in Entebbe, Dar es Salaam, Kigoma, and Morogoro—has been shepherded jointly by **TNC, IUCN, LT SAG** and the **Lake Tanganyika Authority**, culminating in the current set of validated proposals.

While these four sites represent a major milestone, they also highlight the **critical need for further biodiversity data collection** across the lake. Many candidate KBAs, including sites in **Tanzania and Burundi** could not yet be confirmed due to insufficient evidence of species’ continued presence or minimum reproductive unit thresholds—key requirements under the KBA Standard. Improved and coordinated surveys, including fish breeding assessments, habitat mapping, and long term monitoring, will be essential for unlocking a fuller network of confirmed KBAs across Lake Tanganyika.

These KBAs demonstrate the power of regional collaboration and science based conservation to recognise and protect the world's most irreplaceable biodiversity places. As additional data become available—and with sustained

engagement from the LTA, LT SAG, local communities, national agencies, and supporting partners—Lake Tanganyika has the potential to become one of the world's best documented freshwater KBA aquascapes.

## Beyond the pot: the invaluable socioecological potential of Key Biodiversity areas (KBAs) on Lake Tanganyika

**Authors:** Lwabanya MABO & Lloyd H. Haambiya

The Lake Tanganyika (LT) fisheries have, from time immemorial, provided a vital lifeline beyond its shoreline, mainly defined by its extensive fish value chain, stretching from actual riparian dwellers, processors, traders, transporters, and retailers to all levels. With its unique species endemism, fish from this lake provide a spectacular level of taste, from the famous English fish (Nkupu, Kuhe), to the perches, to the small coloured cichlids. However, for centuries, fisheries from this lake have not been viewed beyond the pot – fish of value are those providing consumptive use.

A recent study by the Nature Conservancy's Lake Tanganyika Program on the ornamental fish trade found that smaller, brightly coloured cichlids could provide an additional layer beyond the fish nutritional value chain, when considered as pets that could provide a new set of lucrative business lines for fisheries. Working with a local veteran ornamental operator, researchers discovered a direct relationship between the number of fish extraction points, the number of species exploited, and the KBA perimeters. KBAs at Mpulungu and Cameron Bay, which fall within the community-led management model, had a significantly higher number of critical extraction sites than non-KBA-designated localities. Comparing the market value when a cichlid fish is taken as an ornamental and when regarded as relish reveals that the resource can offer invaluable contributions to the socioecological needs of the lake when taken as an ornamental. Sustainable harvesting of cichlid fish for the pet trade has several economic advantages. A single pet fish fetches on average \$5 to \$60 (USD); way better compared to 100 pieces of the same costing being \$1 (USD) when taken



as food. Its common place that these species are also exploited unsustainably using tiny meshed seine nets and monofilament nets for food. While the ornamental fish trade exists on the lake, the business venture remains fragmented, poorly supported, and likely to pose a serious conservation challenge if not well regulated. In the face of dwindling commercial fish stocks of high consumptive value, we contend that small bright-coloured cichlids, if taken beyond the pot, can offer a sustainable option as extractive ornamental fisheries or pet aquaculture.

The Zambian front of LT has two confirmed and three candidate KBAs, all delineated within the littoral zone, spanning depths from 0 to 70 m. This depth range is important for LT fish communities, providing suitable habitats and food resources. Using the KBA model to protect nearshore fish communities — some of which are listed as endangered or near threatened by the IUCN Red List — will not only boost the recovery of related fish species in designated habitats but is also likely to add value to the ornamental fish trade, which we strongly view as a sustainable alternative to the current consumptive use.

# Madagascar: 6 Marine and Coastal KBA Sites Confirmed Under the IUCN Standard, Covering More Than 3 Million Hectares

Author: GEF6-MPAs Madagascar



## Six Sites, More Than 3 Million Hectares Recognised

The results are already significant: through the GEF6-MPA project, six marine and coastal KBA sites have been officially confirmed in Madagascar by the KBA Secretariat, covering 3,155,685 hectares — [Tendro Atsimon'ny Nosy](#), [Tandavandriava Nosy Be – Tsimipaika Bay](#), the [Mahavavy-Kinkony Complex](#), [Antongil Bay](#), [Nosy Boraha Île Sainte-Marie](#), and [Bombetoka Beleboka](#). The momentum continues, with five new sites representing more than 1,700,000 hectares still under evaluation.

Distributed along the Malagasy coastline, these sites encompass a mosaic of essential marine and coastal ecosystems — coral reefs, mangroves, breeding grounds for marine mammals including cetaceans, and refuge areas for sea turtles — whose importance to global biodiversity is well established.

## From KBA Label to Marine Protected Areas: a Chain of Concrete Results

The KBA label provided the scientific foundation upon which the GEF6-MPA project was able to identify and prioritise sites for support in the creation of Marine Protected Areas. To date, three MPAs have already been granted temporary

creation status: the AMTP Sorkay (Nosy Boraha – Sainte-Marie), the AMP Tandavandriava Nosy-Be, and the AMP Atimo Vata'e. The Antongil Bay MPA completes this network, which is currently being structured.

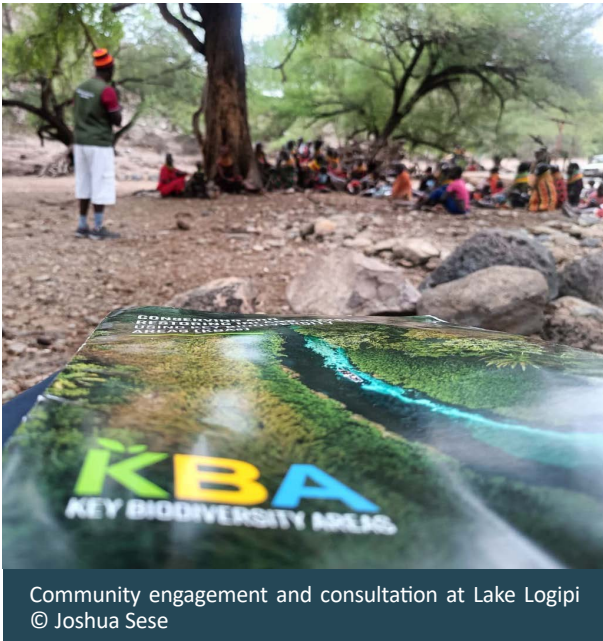
On the ground, three KBA sites have also been officially commemorated through the installation of commemorative steles — a powerful gesture that visibly anchors the long-term commitment of local communities and the State.

This chain of results — from label to MPA, from map to monument — illustrates the operational power of KBAs as a marine conservation tool in Madagascar.



# Kenya Steps Forward in Advancing the Key Biodiversity Areas Process

**Author:** Paul Gacheru, Nature Kenya



Community engagement and consultation at Lake Logipi  
© Joshua Sese

- Five national KBA training sessions were held in 2025, reaching over 200 government practitioners, and 33 conservancy representatives.
- 330 potential KBAs profiled, triggered by 310 species across multiple taxonomic groups.
- Site-level community consultations were held in Lake Logipi (Northern Kenya) and Kaya Muhaka (on the Kenyan coast).
- Monitoring of 68 legacy KBAs (2004–2025) indicates deteriorating site conditions, persistent pressures, and reduced conservation response.

In 2025, Kenya made significant progress in strengthening national and regional capacity for KBA identification, monitoring, and reassessment by delivering five national training workshops. These were delivered in collaboration with Kenya's KBA national focal institutions, namely the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Wildlife Research & Training Institute (WRTI), National Museums of Kenya (NMK), and the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA).

A key insight from the training sessions is that many KBA trigger species - particularly wide-ranging mammals and other species of conservation concern occur predominantly outside formally protected areas, thereby underscoring the need to expand KBA identification efforts beyond traditional protected area networks.

## A Coordinated National Approach

The Kenya KBA National Coordination Group (NCG), supported by a monitoring working group and a technical working group comprising taxonomic experts in birds, mammals, reptiles,



Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association representative during capacity-building training © Brian Otiego

amphibians, plants, butterflies, and fish was formed to support the KBA reassessment. Through this collaborative effort, 330 potential KBAs have already been profiled, triggered by 310 species. These efforts mark major milestone in expanding the national KBA network. In addition, community consultations were held in areas around Lake Logipi in Northern Kenya, and at Kaya Muhaka on Kenya's coast, ensuring that local voices help shape KBA ownership and relevance at the grassroots level.

## Monitoring Trends and Emerging Concerns

Kenya's KBA work extends beyond identification. Over the past two decades (2004–2025), 68 legacy KBAs have been monitored in collaboration with key institutions, including the KFS, KWS, WRTI, NMK, and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). A recent monitoring report indicates concerning trends: the STATE of KBAs is declining, PRESSURE on sites remains high, and conservation RESPONSE is also decreasing.

## Looking Ahead

As KBA initiatives continue to expand globally, Kenya's experience highlights the importance of combining technical capacity building with strong institutional coordination and community engagement. By aligning local conservation practice with the Global KBA Standard, Kenya is improving the quality, consistency, and availability of biodiversity data needed to support its site designation, reassessment, and long-term conservation action.

# SOUTH AMERICA



# Adapting TESSA for KBA site management: Co-designing climate-resilient Nature-based Solutions in Ecuador

**Authors:** Stefano Barchiesi<sup>1</sup>, Gabriela Toscano<sup>1</sup>, and Miriam Factos<sup>2</sup>

1. BirdLife International
2. Fundación Jocotoco

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) across Ecuador support globally important biodiversity and provide essential ecosystem services to local communities. These landscapes are increasingly affected by climate change, land-use conversion, mining pressures and wildfire risk. Decision-makers and communities need approaches that can simultaneously safeguard biodiversity, maintain ecosystem service delivery and support climate adaptation. Nature-based solutions (NbS) are an important option for meeting this need.

The project Ecosystem Services of KBAs under Climate Change, funded by the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate (GCBC), adapted the Toolkit for Ecosystem Service Site-based Assessment (TESSA) to support participatory design and validation of NbS across KBA landscapes as follows:

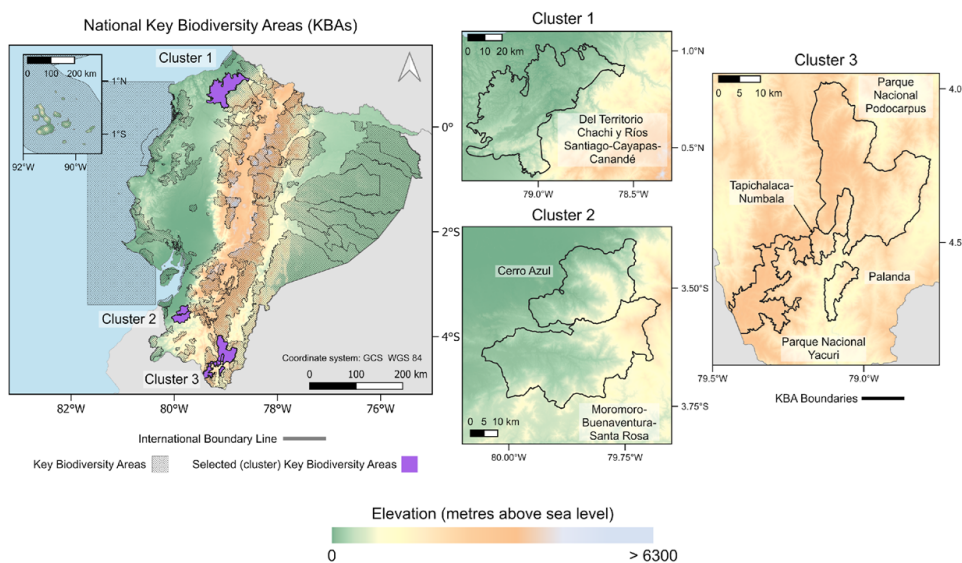
- identifying ecosystem services most critical to communities,
- linking local knowledge with climate and biodiversity modelling,

- supporting collaborative scenario development, and
- identifying evidence-based NbS options aligned with national conservation priorities.

The experience provides practical lessons for practitioners working at the interface of biodiversity conservation, climate adaptation, and community engagement and sustainable livelihoods.

Preliminary results and methodological insights were shared during the recent KBA National Coordination Group meeting, which brought together partners working across Ecuador’s Key Biodiversity Areas to reflect on how ecosystem services can help guide more effective responses to climate change. Rather than presenting a single set of findings, the discussion showcased an evolving approach i.e., one that combines scientific modelling with the knowledge and priorities of those managing and depending on these landscapes.

Ecuador’s Key Biodiversity Areas and Project Cluster Locations



The project is analysing ecosystem services in KBAs using TESSA in three clusters (Fig. 1): Northwest (Choco), Southwest (El Oro) and Southeast (Podocarpus-El Condor.). These clusters contain a diversity of land tenure and management types (i.e., private, municipal, provincial, Indigenous, and national reserves).

The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
 Data sources: Base layers: United Nations Geospatial 2024.  
 KBAs: BirdLife International (2024). The World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas. Developed by the KBA Partnership: BirdLife International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Amphibian Survival Alliance, Conservation International, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, Global Environment Facility, Re:wild, NatureServe, Rainforest Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Wildlife Conservation Society and World Wildlife Fund. Available at [www.keybiodiversityareas.org](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org)  
 Elevation: NASA Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) (2013). Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) Global. Distributed by OpenTopography. <https://doi.org/10.5069/G9445JDF>. Accessed: 2024-11-07

From the cloud forests of Podocarpus–El Cóndor to the productive mosaics of El Oro and the biodiverse systems of the Chocó, a common thread emerged: while climate risks are increasing, so too are opportunities to design solutions that work for both people and nature. Through participatory workshops in Loja and Mindo, stakeholders identified the ecosystem services they rely on most, from water and carbon to tourism and livelihoods, and explored how these could be sustained under future scenarios.

Across the three clusters, freshwater regulation, wild-harvested products, carbon sequestration and (in some KBAs) nature-based tourism emerged as critical ecosystem services, reflecting the strong dependence of local communities on both ecological integrity and diversified livelihoods. In

both cluster 1 and 3, water regulation emerged as a critical ecosystem service, underpinned by forest integrity in the Chocó and by high-altitude ecosystems such as páramos and cloud forests in Podocarpus–El Cóndor. In El Oro, stakeholders also highlighted the importance of agricultural landscapes supporting cacao and diversified agroforestry systems that provide both income and biodiversity benefits.

Participants identified several pressures across the clusters, including agricultural expansion, mining pressures and, in the southern ones, wildfire risk. In El Oro, particular emphasis was placed on managing agricultural–forest mosaics and balancing production systems with conservation objectives.



**Fig. 2** Participatory assessment with local stakeholders using TESSA methodology

Across the three KBA clusters, stakeholders also prioritised NbS interventions grouped into three overarching categories, supported by enabling mechanisms such as compensation for ecosystem services (CES), which can help sustain conservation and restoration efforts over the long term.

Watershed and forest restoration: particularly relevant in Podocarpus–El Cóndor for safeguarding high-altitude water regulation and in Chocó for maintaining watershed stability in high rainfall systems. In El Oro, restoration efforts often focus on strengthening connectivity between remnant forests and agroforestry landscapes.

Sustainable livelihood diversification: Livelihood

diversification emerged as a particularly important NbS pathway in El Oro, where agricultural landscapes are closely interwoven with conservation areas and provide opportunities to balance biodiversity protection with income generation.

Strengthening local governance and planning: Governance strengthening was identified as a cross-cutting priority across all clusters, particularly where land tenure arrangements are complex and require coordination among multiple stakeholders.

What makes this approach particularly valuable is how it connects different types of knowledge.

Modelling helps identify where interventions could deliver the greatest benefits, while stakeholder engagement ensures that proposed Nature-based Solutions are grounded in local realities. While the TESSA is a robust and practical tool for the initial assessment of ecosystem services, it is recommended that it be supplemented with

other methodologies and analytical approaches, depending on the objectives and the level of detail required. The result is not a fixed list of actions, but a shared pathway for identifying solutions that are both impactful and feasible, and that can inform KBA management and national planning processes moving forward.

## Globally Threatened Pampas Meadowlarks (*Lesites defilippii*) are back at a critical breeding site within the “Campos de El Tapado” KBA in northern Uruguay

**Author:** Adrián B. Azpiroz, Chair of the KBA Community

Like other major grassland ecoregions around the world, the Pampas in southeastern South America have suffered significant impacts over the last 400 years. Livestock grazing, agriculture, and, more recently, afforestation have led to substantial habitat alteration, resulting in negative impacts on grassland specialists. A primary example is the Pampas Meadowlark (*Lesites defilippii*), a globally threatened blackbird mainly restricted to large tracts of well-conserved native grasslands. While its former range covered most of the Pampas biome across eastern Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil, it now survives in only a few localities within the first two countries. According to the latest data, only one to two thousand birds remain.

In Uruguay, this species is found in two or three populations across the central and northern parts of the country. Its primary stronghold is the Arerunguá region in southeastern Salto, where a few hundred pairs reside in some of the best grassland tracts of the whole Pampas. Over the last 30 years, this population has been studied and monitored, particularly during a breeding biology study conducted from 2008 to 2016. Surveys showed that each spring, a large proportion of the local breeding population concentrated in a few paddocks that met specific habitat requirements:



patches of relatively long, dense grass for nesting interspersed with shorter vegetation for foraging. For years, approximately 150–200 pairs successfully nested in the area.

However, in the spring of 2016, for reasons not yet fully understood, the main nesting site was abandoned. Most concerning, the birds could not be relocated elsewhere. In late 2016, a post-breeding flock was found, but bird numbers were significantly below historic records. In the following years, indirect evidence suggested a possible link between the disappearance of the birds and the use of a veterinary product that may have affected critical food resources, such as insect larvae. This potential connection has not yet been thoroughly investigated.

Surveys conducted over the past several years have documented a worrying decline, characterized by sparse records of a handful of individuals and abandoned nesting sites. However, a new conservation opportunity emerged in 2025 as approximately 35–45 pairs of meadowlarks reoccupied historic breeding grounds. Although these numbers are far from pre-2016 figures, these findings represent the most significant news for the breeding meadowlarks of the ‘Campos de El Tapado’ KBA in 10 years.

In the short term, the main priority is to conduct a detailed census of meadowlarks throughout the



Native grasslands in “Campos de El Tapado” KBA, northern Uruguay © Adrián B. Azpiroz

Arerunguá region, with an emphasis on historic breeding grounds. In the long term, the future of this iconic Pampas bird depends on the availability of suitable native grassland patches that meet its requirements for area and habitat quality. Given that agricultural intensification threatens the species’ survival, a critical step is identifying and promoting livestock-ranching schemes that maintain essential habitat features and foraging resources. The specific requirements of the Pampas Meadowlark make it an excellent umbrella species; therefore, its conservation would benefit many other lesser-known components of grassland biodiversity.



Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*)  
© Adrián B. Azpiroz



Displaying male Pampas Meadowlark © Adrián B. Azpiroz

# NORTH AMERICA



## KBA Canada reaches 400 KBA milestone and releases their 2025 Annual Report

**Author:** Peter Soroye, WCS Canada



The KBA Canada program published their [2025 Annual Report](#) on Jan 30th, 2026. The report summarizes the incredible milestones and progress achieved by the KBA program throughout 2025, with a focus on spotlighting some of the ways that users are leveraging KBA information to benefit, inform, and inspire conservation work. Illustrating the report are some amazing photos from KBA partners and this year's KBA Canada Photo Contest, as well as figures and maps. This Annual Report stands as a tribute to the dedication and collaborative efforts of the entire Canadian KBA program, including invaluable contributions from partners and supporters.

Highlights from the report include a summary of the (now 400+) Global and National KBAs identified to date, and regional updates and

- The KBA Canada program has identified over 400 Global and National KBAs, for 504 different species and 5 different ecosystems meeting KBA criteria
- The Report collects over 20 distinct ways that KBAs are being used in Canada to support planning, policy, and conservation by governments, NGOs, Indigenous communities and organizations, foundations, and funders.

case studies about how KBAs are supporting on-the-ground KBA monitoring and stewardship. It presents a list of 23 ways that KBAs are already supporting planning, policy, and conservation work by municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal governments, and it gives an overview of outreach and engagement of the KBA Canada program. The report also details some of the larger KBA communications campaigns and successes from 2025. Finally, the report contains detailed appendices with complete information on KBA sites, species and ecosystems, as well as information on data gaps for the program where more knowledge and expertise are needed.

This is the third Annual Report that the KBA Canada Secretariat has produced, with past reports from 2023 and 2024 also available. The creation of this report was led by Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, with support from NatureServe Canada and Birds Canada, and with contributions from other partners and collaborators. As a summary of the state of the KBA program in Canada, the annual reports have been excellent communications tools for updating collaborators, supporting the work of fundraising teams, and helping to introduce newcomers to KBAs.

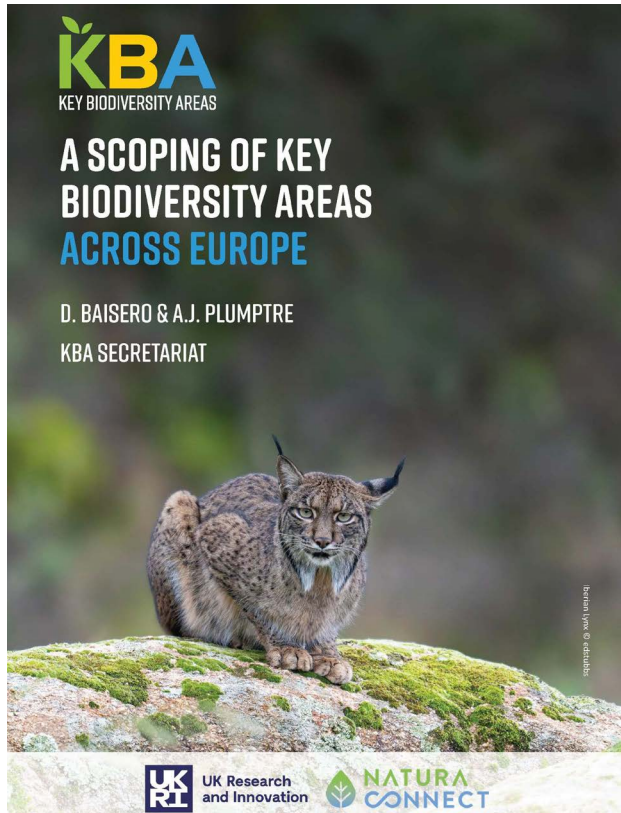


# EUROPE



# A key step toward updating KBA networks across Europe

Author: KBA Communications



- KBAs are increasingly being used by the private sector to identify important areas for biodiversity in reporting frameworks, as well as by funding agencies to guide investment in biodiversity conservation.
- Updating KBA networks across Europe is a critical need. They are recognised in the EU Taxonomy and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) as areas of biodiversity significance – sites where negative impacts are to be avoided by the activities of companies.
- KBAs are used in indicators of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) – especially the 30x30 target.
- Many existing large protected areas could meet global KBA status, with about 79% of existing protected area coverage qualifying.

All European countries have KBAs identified, mostly identified for bird species resulting from the Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas Programme. Birds form 56.6% of species that qualify KBAs in Europe. Additional sites have been identified in Mediterranean countries through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) ecosystem profile for that region, but many using legacy KBA criteria and there is a need to update these sites.

In an effort to advance KBA assessments and reassessment in Europe, a [new report](#) authored by Andrew Plumptre and Daniel Baisero from the Key Biodiversity Areas Secretariat summarises the results of a scoping of KBAs across Europe made with support from the [United Kingdom Research and Innovation fund \(UKRI\)](#) as part of a Horizon Europe project called [NaturaConnect](#). The report focused on identifying where existing KBAs identified using legacy criteria could meet the IUCN global Standard for KBAs, where existing

protected areas could meet KBA status, and where sites outside existing protected areas, identified by the NaturaConnect project for biodiversity conservation, could meet KBA status.

The findings show these key results:

- 1.** Only 21.9% of the existing KBA network has been assessed to meet the criteria in the Global KBA Standard. The scoping analysis indicates that 74.5% could meet these criteria if comprehensively assessed.
- 2.** It was predicted that an additional 12,468 protected areas (7.5% of all European protected areas) could potentially be global KBAs, making a total of 16,450 (9.9%), including existing protected areas that are already KBAs.
- 3.** Many protected areas are small in Europe, and larger sites are more likely to qualify as KBAs because they are more likely to hold larger populations of species. Analysing the surface

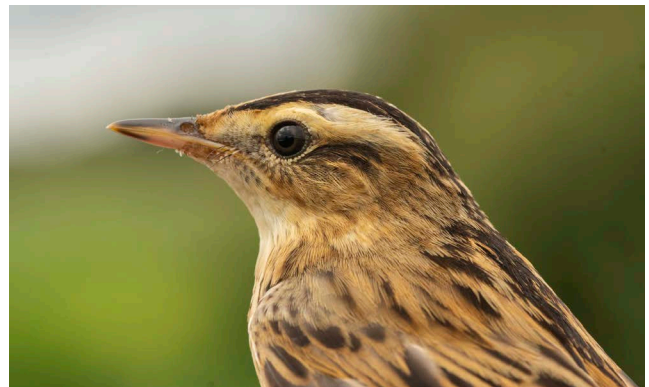
area of protected areas rather than numbers shows that the 16,450 protected areas, that are existing or potential KBAs, could cover 79.4% of the area of the existing European protected area network. Of this, the surface area of 71.6% of terrestrial and 87.6% of coastal and marine protected areas could potentially qualify as KBAs.

**4.** Currently, only 186 species qualify existing global KBAs as assessed against the KBA Global Standard, of which 142 are birds. This could increase to 4,052 species if all KBAs were comprehensively assessed. Identifying KBAs in the existing protected area network could add 1,979 species that might qualify these protected areas as KBAs.

**5.** Of the priority areas for protected area expansion identified by the NaturaConnect systematic conservation planning analysis, 46.4% would potentially qualify as KBAs, mostly in southern Europe and around the Alps. These would add an additional 63 KBA qualifying species beyond those that might qualify existing KBAs or protected areas if fully assessed.

These results show that the largest protected areas that are not currently recognised as KBAs across Europe likely qualify as such because they

hold globally significant populations of species. Together with existing KBAs, they conserve many of the potential species that might qualify sites as KBAs in Europe, although there are some important areas outside of both the existing protected area and KBA networks that might also meet KBA status. However, the scoping is based on species assessed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, and this is not comprehensive for species across Europe. Many plants and invertebrates are not assessed on the Red List, and more species may likely be found and additional sites identified if additional data on un-assessed species are included.



**For more information about the scoping analysis, read the full report [here](#).**

# KBA COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

**Americas (and Chair)** – Adrián B. Azpiroz: [chair.kba.community@keybiodiversityareas.org](mailto:chair.kba.community@keybiodiversityareas.org)  
/ [pampasbirds@gmail.com](mailto:pampasbirds@gmail.com)

**Africa** – Daniel Marnewick: [daniel.marnewick@iucn.org](mailto:daniel.marnewick@iucn.org)

**Asia-Pacific** – Professor Yongut Trisurat: [fforyyt@ku.ac.t](mailto:fforyyt@ku.ac.t)

**Europe and Central Asia** - Konstantina Spiliopoulou: [konaspilio@gmail.com](mailto:konaspilio@gmail.com)

## KBA COMMUNICATIONS:

### Communications working group chair:

Sophia Lucero: [sophia.lucero@birdlife.org](mailto:sophia.lucero@birdlife.org)

## KBA SECRETARIAT:

**Head of the KBA Secretariat** – Andy Plumptre: [aplumptre@keybiodiversityareas.org](mailto:aplumptre@keybiodiversityareas.org)

## KBA REGIONAL FOCAL POINTS:

If you have queries about assessing Key Biodiversity Areas or want to nominate a KBA please contact the Regional Focal Points:

**Africa** - Serge Angali: [sangali@keybiodiversityareas.org](mailto:sangali@keybiodiversityareas.org)

**Australia and Pacific Islands** - Mark O'Brien: [Mark.Obrien@birdlife.org](mailto:Mark.Obrien@birdlife.org)

**Latin America and Caribbean** - Cecilia Tobar-Suárez: [CTobar@keybiodiversityareas.org](mailto:CTobar@keybiodiversityareas.org)

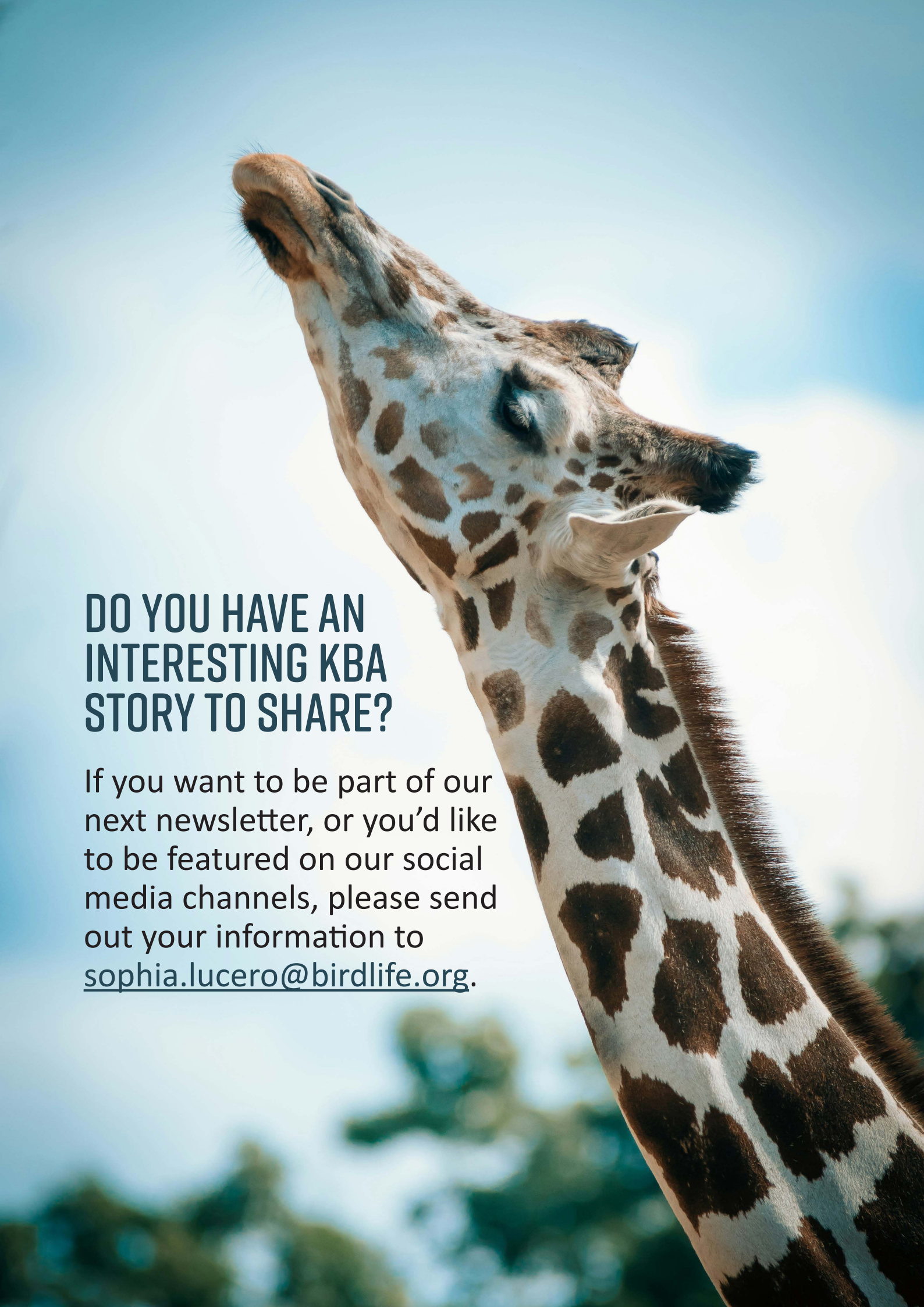
**North America** - Marcelo Tognelli: [mtognelli@abcbirds.org](mailto:mtognelli@abcbirds.org)

**Europe, North Africa and the Middle East** - Catherine Numa: [Catherine.numa@iucn.org](mailto:Catherine.numa@iucn.org)

**Asia** - Samridhi Rijal: [SRijal@keybiodiversityareas.org](mailto:SRijal@keybiodiversityareas.org)

For other regions, please contact the head of the KBA Secretariat, Andy Plumptre:  
[aplumptre@keybiodiversityareas.org](mailto:aplumptre@keybiodiversityareas.org)

Layout and design - Sophia Lucero: [sophia.lucero@birdlife.org](mailto:sophia.lucero@birdlife.org)

A close-up, low-angle shot of a giraffe's head and neck, looking upwards against a clear blue sky. The giraffe's distinctive brown and white spotted pattern is clearly visible. The background is slightly blurred, showing green foliage.

## 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](mailto:sophia.lucero@birdlife.org).

KBA PARTNERS:



[www.keybiodiversityareas.org](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org)



[@KeyBiodiversity](https://www.instagram.com/KeyBiodiversity)