



Asia Pacific

CONSERVATION FOR PEOPLE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST REGION

Nature has many faces in Asia Pacific.



Gajid and her herd on the grassland steppe of eastern Mongolia's Tosonhulstai Nature Reserve. © Ted Wood;
Cover: Dancers from Touw village perform their unique *Lug* traditional dance in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia. © Tim Calver

AT DUSK, GAJID, wearing a traditional *deel* belted with green silk, carries milk from her family's cattle herd, surrounded by the unfathomably vast Mongolian grasslands where over one million gazelle still roam. / **IN THE SPRAWLING SOLOMON ISLANDS,** a local Arnavon Community Marine Park ranger cups his hands around a just-hatched, critically endangered hawksbill sea turtle, placing it into the sand where it scrambles its way to the Pacific. / **THREE THOUSAND MILES TO THE WEST,** a small community deep within the tropical forests of Indonesian Borneo—where yellow meranti and other towering tree species are felled at an alarming rate—fights to protect their own traditional lands from destruction.

THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE PEOPLE, LANDS, WATERS AND WILDLIFE OF ASIA PACIFIC. It is home to over 4.3 billion people (60 percent of the global population), nurtures some of the oldest cultures on the planet, and offers a wealth of diverse landscapes and seascapes—from the heights of the Himalayas to the depths of the Pacific Ocean.

But the region is growing at a phenomenal rate, bearing little resemblance to what it was even a few decades ago. As Asia Pacific's economies expand, rapid urbanization and rising demand for natural resources drive climate change and put enormous pressure on lands, oceans and freshwater. Warming ocean temperatures caused by climate change are turning Pacific coral reefs from vibrant ecosystems into underwater wastelands. Tropical forests in Indonesia are cleared for vast agriculture. Mongolian grasslands are razed for mining pits. And tens of millions of people throughout Asia Pacific lack reliable access to clean water.

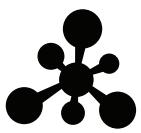
In Asia Pacific, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is advancing conservation approaches that can address these problems at scale. We have the credibility, partnerships, science and field experience developed in the region for over a quarter-century to build solutions that will enable both people and nature in Asia Pacific to thrive. **Your support is what makes this work possible.**

The Nature Conservancy
has 30 years' experience
working in Asia Pacific.

We are:



A global conservation group, active in 79 countries and territories



Driven by research and new technology, with a team of over 400 scientists working to solve the world's greatest environmental challenges



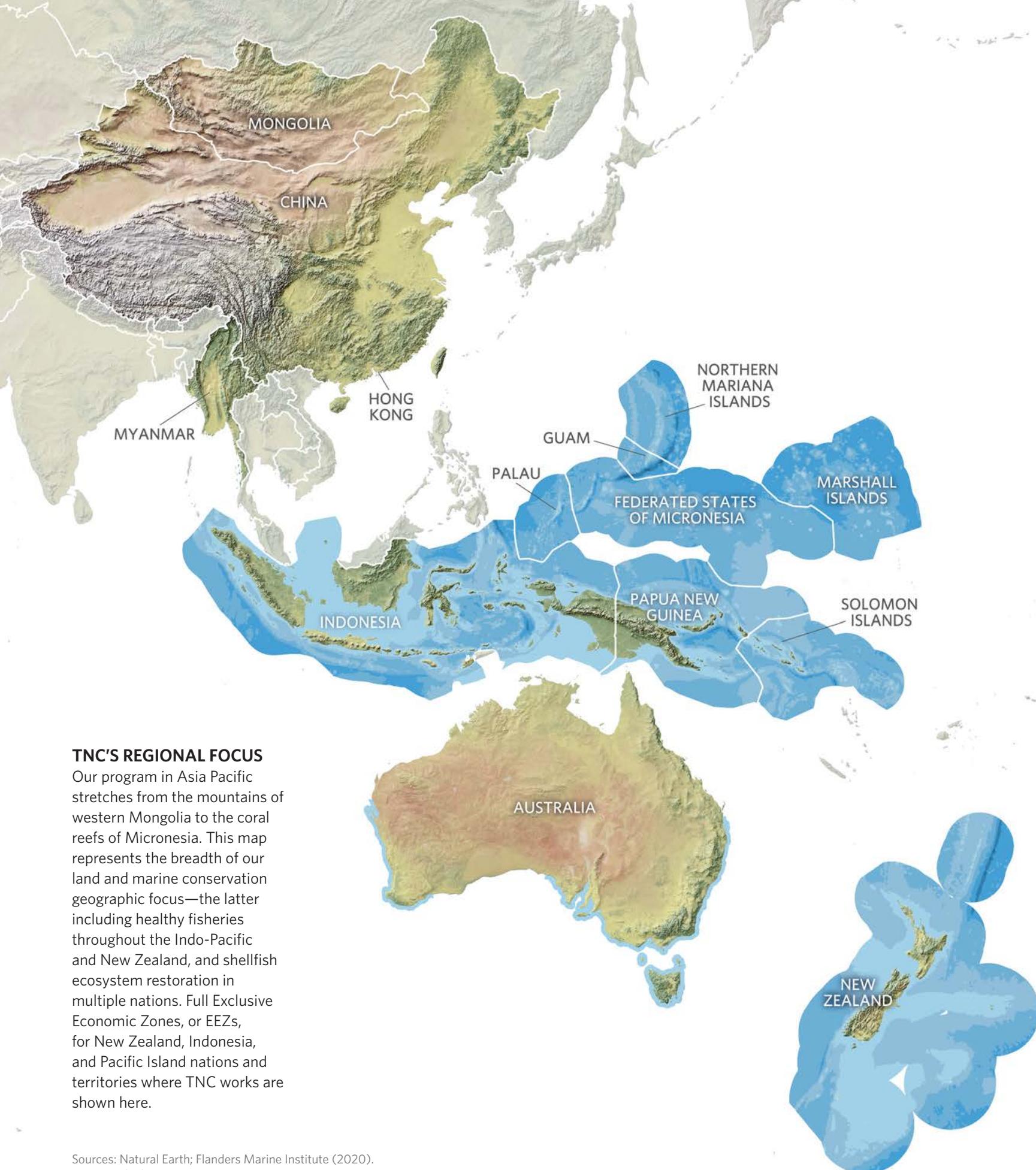
Committed to a collaborative and non-confrontational approach, with the ability to work in politically sensitive areas and convene Indigenous peoples, local communities, government, companies and others around common goals



Focused on success at scale, so that we may achieve the greatest possible outcomes for nature and people



Top: Wes Sam wears a traditional Dayak Wehea headband called a *Keltoq*, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. © Nick Hall; **Bottom left:** Dixon Motui, an Arnavon Community Marine Conservation Area ranger, helps to unearth a nest of baby hawksbill turtles and guide them toward the ocean, Solomon Islands. © Tim Calver; **Bottom right:** Yoga overlooking the skyline of Hong Kong. © Chun Kit Chong/TNC Photo Contest



Sources: Natural Earth; Flanders Marine Institute (2020).
Cartography by Nate Peterson.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY HAS TWO GLOBAL PRIORITIES:

- Protect lands, oceans and freshwater
- Mitigate the effects of climate change and build resilience to future impacts

These priorities are aligned with global goals and targets such as the **Paris Climate Agreement**, the **Convention on Biological Diversity** and the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

TO ACHIEVE MEANINGFUL, MEASURABLE AND DELIVERABLE OUTCOMES, we have deployed a range of strategies throughout the countries and territories where we work in Asia Pacific.

■ Protect Lands, Oceans and Freshwater

■ Tackle Climate Change

Mongolia ■

OUR FOCUS: Protected areas expansion, herder community engagement

Area: 603,900 mi²

Population: 3.3 million

New Zealand ■ ■

OUR FOCUS: Healthy river catchments and shellfish ecosystems, sustainable aquaculture

Area: 1.8 million mi² (land and sea area)

Population: 4.8 million

China ■ ■

OUR FOCUS: Nature-based solutions to climate change, healthy rivers, protected landscapes, shellfish reef restoration

Area: 3.7 million mi²

Population: 1.4 billion

Pacific Islands*

OUR FOCUS: Healthy fisheries, climate mitigation and resilience, community-based conservation

Palau

Area: 233,197 mi²

Population: 18,092

Federated States of Micronesia

Area: 1.2 million mi²

Population: 115,021

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Area: 1.3 million mi²

Population: 59,194

Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (U.S.)

Area: 971,860 mi²

Population: 226,340

Papua New Guinea

Area: 1.9 million mi²

Population: 8.9 million

Solomon Islands

Area: 987,655 mi²

Population: 686,878

*Total area of Pacific Island nations/territories listed includes maritime waters

Australia ■ ■

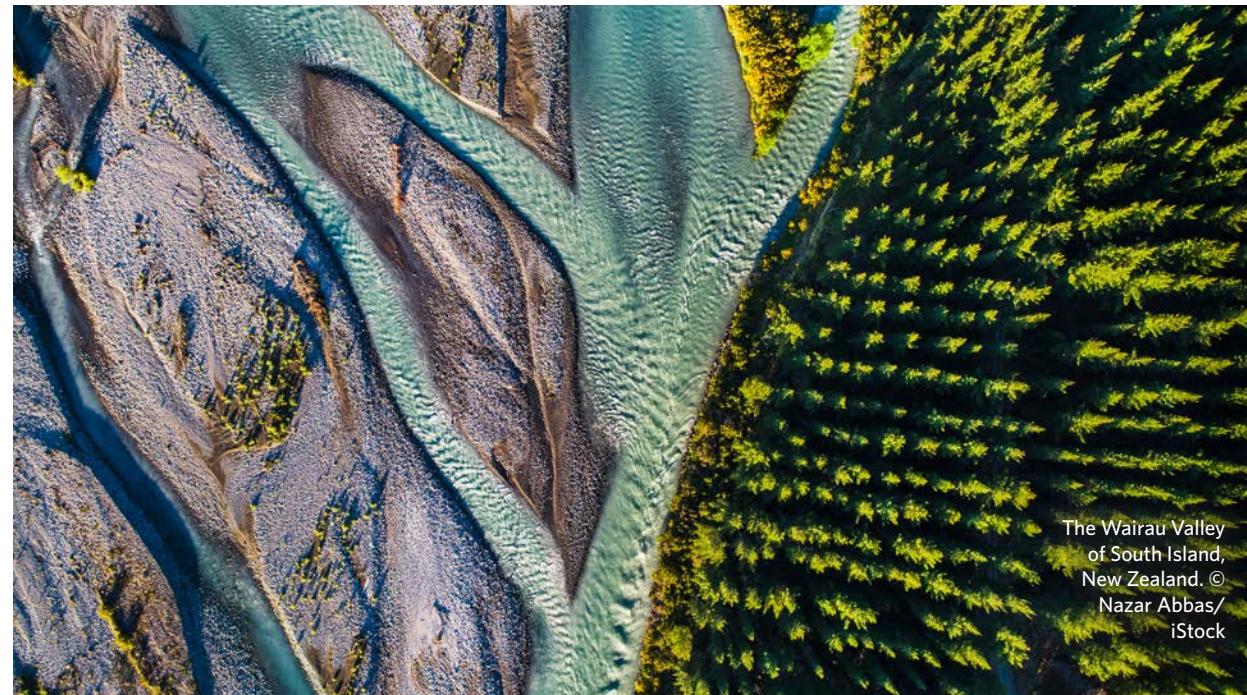
OUR FOCUS: Indigenous land management, shellfish reef restoration, bushfire recovery

Area: 3 million mi²

Population: 25.5 million

CONSERVATION CAN LIFT UP COMMUNITIES.

It can safeguard precious natural resources from short-term gain. And it can put us on a sustainable path during uncertain times. Here are just some of the ways we are working for nature and people in Asia Pacific.



NEW ZEALAND

100% Pure

90%
of New Zealand's critical wetland habitats have been drained.

ABUNDANT FRESHWATER is central to New Zealand's national identity and predates European settlement: Māori tribal identity is strongly linked to water, with each water body having its own *mauri*, or life force. But New Zealand's freshwater resources face significant threats that impact the nation's "100% Pure" image. Ninety percent of wetlands have been drained, 76 percent of freshwater fish species are threatened, and runoff from the agricultural and dairy sectors has fouled waterways—so much so that swimming is not advised in 60 percent of government-monitored rivers. TNC is supporting landscape-scale management that will protect biodiversity, address climate change, and help the government achieve a goal of improving water quality in 90 percent of its rivers and lakes by 2040. This plan is informed by our extensive experience in land management and water investments around the world, as well as our engagement with iwi (Māori tribes), industry stakeholders and local communities in New Zealand.

ACROSS THE REGION

Supporting Women, Conservation's Change Agents

NATURE BELONGS TO US ALL. But for too long, many women around the world who depend the most on healthy forests, reefs and rivers are denied a voice in how local natural resources are managed.

A growing body of evidence shows that conservation decisions inclusive of women lead to stronger outcomes for the long-term. That's why TNC is committed to helping women be agents of change for nature in their communities. "Before we worked with TNC, women were neglected," says Moira Dasipio, a female chief in Isabel Province, Solomon Islands. "Women didn't have a strong voice in decision making around our natural resources. We were just left to our kitchens, and there we would stay."

For example, in Papua New Guinea, TNC partners with the women of *Mangoro Market Meri* (meaning Mangroves, Women and Markets) in their efforts to build markets for sustainably harvested mangrove products, such as shellfish and mud crabs. We provide training in leadership, financial literacy and business management that generates much-needed income and employment opportunities. And we're helping to foster a knowledge-sharing network between local women's groups so they can create more prosperous and healthy futures for their families and villages.

When conservation is inclusive of women's voices, everyone wins.

Left to right: Maleta Tokwakwasi, Ruth Konia, Ursula Rakova and Magdalene Tara from Papua New Guinea were photographed at TNC's *Nature's Leading Women* conference in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia, June 2018. © Tim Calver



30%

Mongolia
seeks to protect
30 percent of
national land
by 2030.

MONGOLIA

Wide Open Spaces

"**THERE IS AN OLD TEACHING HERE** in Mongolia that says, 'Don't give up your ancestors' land, even if God himself is asking you to.'" These are the words of Myadagmaa Janchiv, a local herder whose community can be found near the Kherlen Toono Nature Reserve of Mongolia's Eastern Steppe. Centuries ago, the Steppe looked much like it does today: nomadic families grazing their horses, cows, goats and sheep. Mesmerizing Mongolian gazelle herds migrate seasonally through this landscape.

But such abundance can never be taken for granted. Mining, rapid increases in livestock population and other challenges have threatened to upend the ecological balance of Mongolia's grasslands. That's why in 2008 TNC launched a new program in Mongolia to advance an ambitious goal by the national government: formally protect 30 percent of all lands—grasslands as well as rugged western mountain ranges and Gobi Desert landscapes—by 2030. TNC has provided the government with an ecological blueprint of areas to be prioritized for protection. And we've forged partnerships with herding communities across the country seeking to leverage a new national law that bestows formal rights upon them to manage critical grazing lands. The results: in just the past two years, nearly 12 million acres of land (an area the size of Maryland) have been added to a national system of protected areas.



Aerial view of a
Mongolian landscape.
© Chris Pague/TNC

Bornean orangutan in the trees, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. © Lebin Yen



INDONESIA

Saving the Forests of Borneo

IN RECENT DECADES, the island of Borneo has lost millions of acres of forests. Timber, mining and agricultural conversion to meet global demand for palm oil—an ingredient found in consumer products from chocolate to lipstick—are largely to blame. While there have been economic gains, too often forest conversion has failed to deliver benefits to local communities. And habitat for orangutans and other wildlife has declined precipitously.

Protecting intact forest landscapes and preventing substantial carbon emissions requires new thinking and engagement with government, the private sector and forest communities. Building on our proven strategies to reduce environmental impact through sustainable forestry methods and advance community-based conservation programs, TNC has developed a unique initiative to protect inactive logging concessions in Borneo.* These areas represent some of the world's most biodiverse forests but are often poorly protected and at risk of fragmentation and encroachment. Inactive concessions also contain carbon that, once lost, may not be recoverable in time to avoid significant climate impacts. To address this, we are working to purchase long-term concession licenses in order to stop forest loss, and partner with local communities to explore sustainable economic development initiatives, from ecotourism to deforestation-free commodities.

Orangutans
are a critically
endangered
primate species
affected by habitat
loss throughout
Indonesia.

*TNC's conservation work in Indonesia is implemented with our main in-country NGO partner, Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara, or YKAN.

A view of the Old Creek River Valley meandering through Laohegou Nature Reserve, Sichuan Province, China. © Nick Hall



CHINA

In China, a Historic Opportunity to Fight Climate Change

REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS at a scale needed to avert a climate catastrophe cannot be achieved without China. And the good news is that the world's most populous nation is embracing a strategy often hiding in plain sight: protecting and revitalizing forests, grasslands and wetlands to store carbon and prevent it from being released into the atmosphere. Globally, these *nature-based solutions* can provide up to 37 percent of the mitigation needed by 2030 to keep global warming below 2°C. In China, TNC collaborates with a wide range of partners to deepen scientific expertise, develop policy incentives and leverage corporate investments to unlock the full potential of nature-based solutions—from piloting large-scale reforestation projects in Inner Mongolia to providing technical expertise as China develops what will be the world's largest emissions trading framework.

In the next decade,
nature can provide
one-third
of the solutions
needed to tackle
climate change.

THE PACIFIC ISLANDS AND INDONESIA

The Future of Fish

IN 2020, COVID-19 DROVE CONSUMERS away from restaurants and into the canned goods aisle. The tuna industry, which relies on a vast swath of ocean west of Hawai'i for nearly two-thirds of global volume, saw wholesale prices for canned fish jump by over 40 percent in a few short months. But while fishing vessels have intensified their days at sea to meet demand for albacore and skipjack, the pandemic has limited the number of onboard observers whose job it is to prevent illegal fishing activities. And despite price surges, many fishers in Indonesia have been compensated less, not more, for their catch during the pandemic due to breakdowns along the global supply chain.

TNC has built a regional reputation among governments, industry and communities as a go-to partner for improving fisheries health. Key elements of our approach range from the development and deployment of artificial intelligence-assisted monitoring that reduces the need for human observers—an approach that has proven its unique value during COVID-19—to contributing needed research on the health of local and regional fishing grounds. We establish multi-stakeholder coalitions that improve stock volume in domestic fisheries and promote sustainable practices across the supply chain—from bait to plate. Whether it's a tribal community in Papua New Guinea reliant on sea cucumber exports or a fleet of tuna vessels adopting electronic monitoring technology in the Marshall Islands, we know that healthy oceans and sustainable fisheries go hand in hand.

60%
of the world's tuna
comes from the
Pacific Islands.

A young boy hoists a skipjack tuna freshly caught by his father and uncle in Walalung Village, Kosrae, Micronesia. © Nick Hall





Lulu Zhou of TNC's Hong Kong program (foreground) works with her team on an oyster reef deployment project in Lau Fau Shan, Hong Kong. © Kyle Obermann

ACROSS THE REGION

Rebuilding Critical Marine Ecosystems

90%
of Asia Pacific's shellfish reefs have been degraded or destroyed. But there is hope to rebuild.

SHELLFISH TYPICALLY DO NOT create news headlines, nor do these animals star in high-profile conservation campaigns to save them. But the large-scale disappearance of oysters and mussels from marine environments in Asia Pacific has severe consequences for the over one billion people who live in the region's coastal areas. Over 90 percent of Asia Pacific's once-abundant shellfish reefs are gone, as are many of the key benefits they provide, such as water filtration, shoreline protection, aquatic habitat and income for fishers. Without immediate intervention, what's left of these critical ecosystems could disappear entirely.

But oyster reefs and other shellfish habitats can be rebuilt. Across Asia Pacific, TNC is reviving coastal zones through intensive restoration of key shellfish reef areas. From the southern shores of Australia to urban-adjacent reefs in New Zealand, Hong Kong and Zhejiang Province in China, we are demonstrating how restoration and improved management can achieve long-term shellfish reef and coastal water recovery, while providing an opportunity for communities to engage in conservation and improve local livelihoods.

MYANMAR

Guardians of the Forest

FOR CENTURIES, Myanmar has relied on domesticated elephants for hauling teak and other valuable hardwood harvested from forests. These elephants live twice as long as zoo elephants and are highly well-cared for (each animal is given a *mahout*, or caretaker, who is devoted to the well-being of the elephant for its lifetime). Their labor is an example of one of the world's greatest low-impact methods of timber production, keeping forests free of extensive logging roads, bulldozers and other heavy machinery that take a much greater toll on nature. But as the annual log cut in Myanmar has declined over the last decade, demand for timber elephants has fallen, leaving a growing number of these animals, and their *mahout*-families, with an uncertain future.

TNC is committed to protecting and restoring Myanmar's forests, and works with a broad partner coalition to better manage production forests and create new protected areas—both of which will help the nation to reduce emissions. Timber elephants represent the third-largest potential source of emission reductions among Myanmar's nature-based solutions to climate change. Here, we're improving access to veterinary care, developing alternative livelihoods such as humane elephant ecotourism, and strengthening a national tracking system to prevent poaching and trafficking.

Myanmar's biodiverse forests are the second-largest in Southeast Asia.



A family of timber elephants in central Myanmar.
© Justine E. Haasheer/TNC

A controlled, early-season burn to prevent late-season bushfires in Australia's Northern Territory. © Ted Wood



AUSTRALIA

Reviving Indigenous Land Management Practices

60K

Indigenous Australians have developed traditional land management approaches for over 60,000 years.

FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS, Indigenous Australians sustainably managed their natural resources, long before the birth of the modern conservation movement. But European settlement upended their way of life, causing not only huge cultural and social dislocation but also devastating impacts on the environment. For example, the traditional practice of setting small fires in early spring to prevent larger, late-season blazes was all but abandoned, contributing in part to the crippling bushfires we see today.

But with ownership or rights to over 70 percent of Northern Australian grasslands, Indigenous peoples can restore traditional conservation management for the benefit of their communities—and indeed of all Australians. Over the past decade, TNC has partnered with Indigenous communities to improve tropical savanna grasslands management. We are blending science and traditional knowledge to address development pressures, reduce carbon emissions, preserve habitat for iconic wildlife and build new economic opportunities for Indigenous communities.

ACROSS THE REGION

The Science of Sustainability

SCIENCE MATTERS, especially at this critical turning point for nature. In Asia Pacific, our scientists contribute invaluable research and insights that drive conservation solutions. For example:

- From coastal waters to the high seas, we've deployed marine spatial planning to help governments, communities and industry make informed and coordinated decisions about how to use ocean resources sustainably.
- In the forests of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Myanmar, we conduct *bioacoustic monitoring*—recording and analyzing wildlife vocalizations, from birds to bats and primates—to produce a soundscape that tells us more about species diversity and population size than satellite imagery and other tools can. Changes in the soundscape can serve as a warning sign that a forest's health is in trouble.
- From Palau to the Marshall Islands, we study the effect of climate change on coral reefs to determine why some reefs are more resilient than others.
- We synthesize multiple, state-of-the-art global assessments to identify *Last Chance Ecosystems*—intact habitats (in Asia Pacific and around the world) that must be prioritized for protection to prevent animal extinctions and biodiversity loss.

We cannot solve the world's biggest conservation challenges without sound science.



Asia Pacific Chief Scientist Edward Game deploys a bioacoustic recorder in the Adelbert Mountains of Papua New Guinea. © Justine E. Hausheer/TNC



The Nature Conservancy



JOIN US AS WE WORK TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ASIA PACIFIC.

A gift to The Nature Conservancy's Asia Pacific Region goes far to protect biodiversity, tackle climate change and give hope to communities seeking to live in harmony with nature.

For more information, visit nature.org/asiapacific or contact Asia Pacific Development Director Aura Parks at aura.parks@tnc.org.

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THANK YOU 谢谢 KAMMAGAR TERIMA KASIH

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