



ASIA PACIFIC

CONSERVATION IN A DEFINING DECADE

— IMPACT REPORT —

The Nature
Conservancy 

“We choose to stay in this forest because our life is here. Our great grandparents still live here. This is our life. Our forest.”

Asut

Punan Batu community,
Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo)



“There is an old teaching here that says, ‘Don’t give up your ancestors’ land—even if God himself is asking you to.’”

Myadagmaa Janchiv

Community herder near Kherlen
Toono Nature Reserve, Mongolia



“My father was a marine biologist and mangrove scientist. And from a young age, I learned from him how nature looks after our needs, how our behavior toward the environment determines our very existence.”

Mazzella Maniwavie

Mangrove Scientist, The Nature
Conservancy—Papua New Guinea



Cover: A traditional herding family corrals their livestock at sunset, Arkhangai province, Mongolia. © Timothy Allen
Clockwise from top: Tradition, Mongolia. © Bayar Balgantseren; Mazzella Maniwavie conducts a study on mangrove health, Papua New Guinea. © Ruth Konia/TNC; Shrouded tropical forests of Kalimantan. © iStock

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Waves © Ines Leal/TNC Photo Contest 2021



Together, We Find a Way

Dear Friends,

I am so proud to present The Nature Conservancy's annual impact report for Asia Pacific—my first as Regional Managing Director.

The past twelve months have been challenging on so many levels for the entire global community, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been no exception. Despite the threats presented by the pandemic, we are urgently taking action throughout Asia Pacific alongside governments, businesses, and the general public. This presents a unique window of opportunity for TNC to strengthen existing partnerships and forge new ones to save nature on an unprecedented scale—and we're not letting that opportunity pass us by.

Some of our best and most exciting results for 2021 are detailed in the following sections of this report. I am particularly excited to see our continued and growing focus on people-centered conservation, with inspiring examples in China, Indonesia, Mongolia, and Papua New Guinea. As conservationists, I firmly believe that we need to offer solutions that align with the aspirations of the communities where we work. We cannot succeed without people being at the center of all that we do.

I'm thrilled to see TNC deepen its relationships with governments and public sector partners. This includes securing a multi-million dollar grant from the Australian government to restore shellfish reefs across 60 sites, replenishing a long-decimated ecosystem. We also

formalized our partnership with the Asian Development Bank, an institution that annually invests billions of dollars in sustainable development in our region.

And throughout 2021, our scientists published critical research in some of the world's most prominent journals. This contribution to our shared knowledge base is truly amazing and continues to be the source of our credibility as conservation partners.

Of course, none of what we achieved in 2021 would have been possible without the generous support and guidance of our donors and trustees. Together, we raised \$18 million in major gifts alone for Asia Pacific in FY21, which is truly remarkable. While a substantial share of this funding came from long-standing supporters, it is inspiring to see new donors and trustees joining our giving community.

Thank you so much for helping make 2021 a year of success! As I look to the future, I am excited by the projects we have in the pipeline in the coming year. Given the urgency of the challenges we face, my focus will be on leading a team of passionate conservationists to take our work to scale. We don't have a second to lose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. McGoldrick". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Will McGoldrick
Regional Managing Director
The Nature Conservancy-Asia Pacific



REGION AT THE CROSSROADS.

The science is clear: We must act now to halt catastrophic climate change and biodiversity loss. What the world does between now and 2030 will determine whether we slow warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius—the level scientists agree could avoid the worst impacts of climate change—while also conserving enough land and water to slow the rapid acceleration of species loss and ultimately safeguard people from the catastrophic effects of these crises.

But we cannot succeed without charting a nature-positive path in Asia Pacific. An estimated 4.3 billion people depend on the region's natural resources for livelihoods and sustenance, from traditional herding families of the Mongolian grasslands to coastal fishing communities of Indonesia's Bird's Head Seascape.

The good news is that this path is possible.¹ **We must fully understand the drivers of environmental loss, advance new solutions, and engage people who are the rightful partners of conservation.**

This is at the heart of The Nature Conservancy's Asia Pacific program.

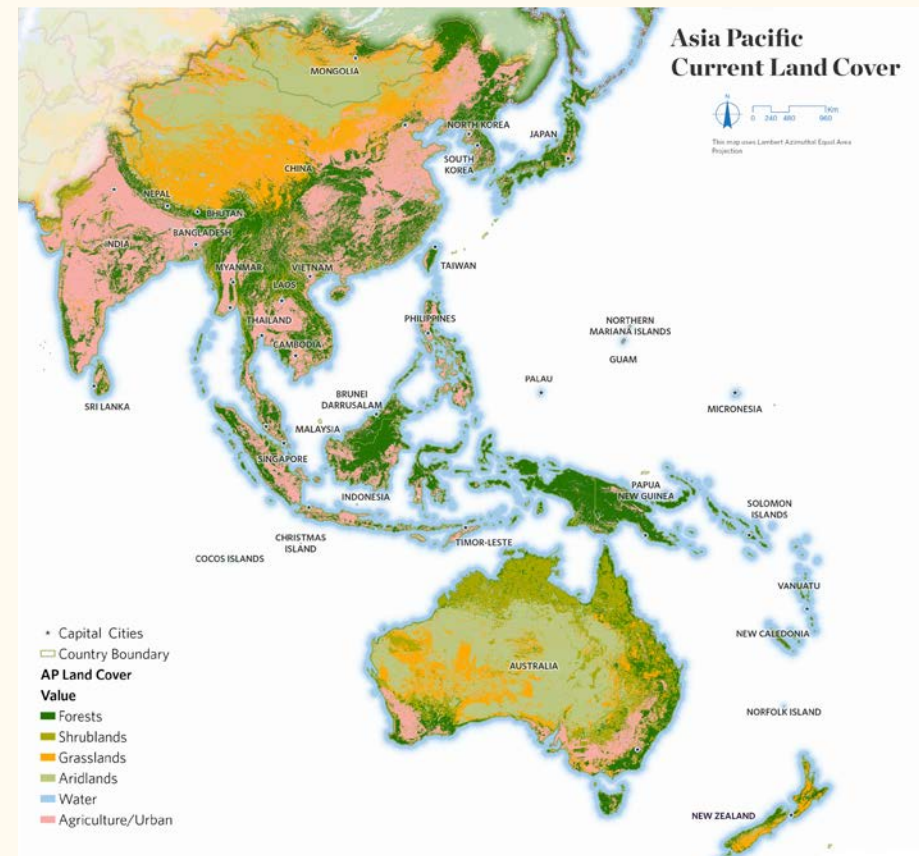
Left: Aerial view of a mangrove conservation site in East Java, Indonesia. © Wahyu Budiyanto/TNC Photo Contest 2021

Asia Pacific: A Brief Situational Analysis

Ecosystems and natural carbon sinks are being pushed to the brink in Asia Pacific.

The region is growing at a phenomenal rate, bearing little resemblance to what it was even a few years 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. The following maps present some of Asia Pacific's primary challenges. —————>

1. IPBES (2018): Summary for policymakers of the regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Asia and the Pacific of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. M. Karki, S. Senaratna Sellamuttu, S. Okayasu, W. Suzuki, L. A. Acosta, Y. Alhafedh, J. A. Anticamara, A. G. Ausseil, K. Davies, A. Gasparatos, H. Gundimeda, I. Faridah-Hanum, R. Kohsaka, R. Kumar, S. Managi, N. Wu, A. Rajvanshi, G. S. Rawat, P. Riordan, S. Sharma, A. Virk, C. Wang, T. Yahara and Y. C. Youn (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 41 pages.

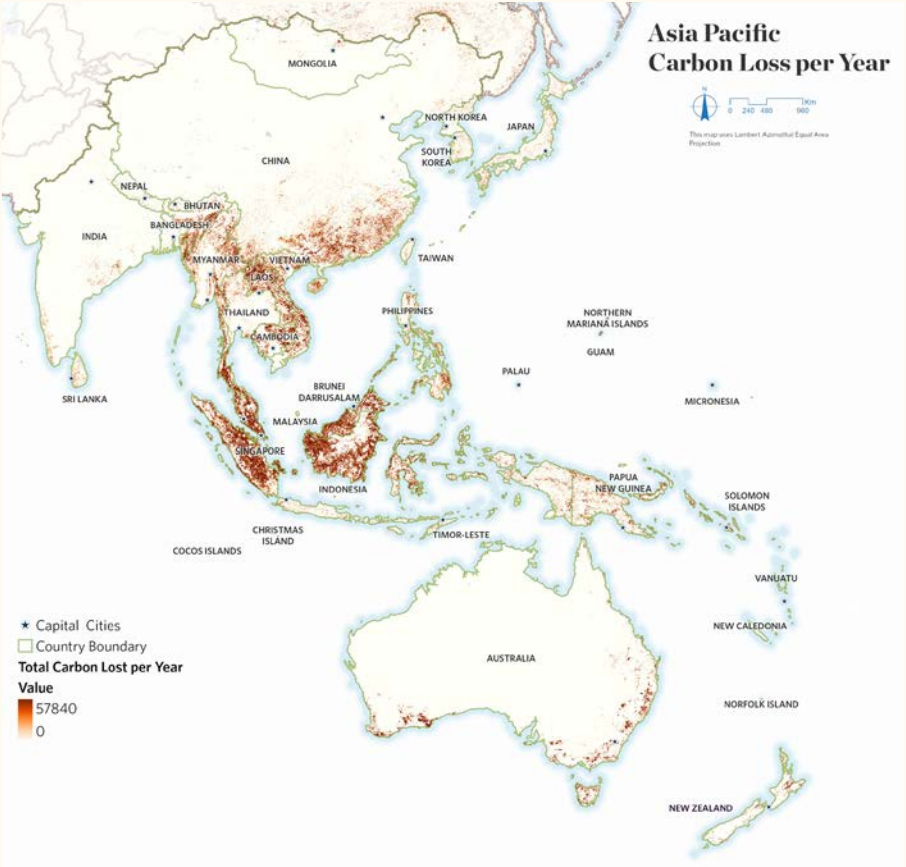


Natural landscapes are disappearing.

Deforestation, expanding agriculture, urbanization, and other threats are impacting land ecosystems across the region.

Despite Covid-19's disruptive impacts, Asia Pacific economies remain the world's fastest-growing, according to the International Monetary Fund. As a result, hundreds of millions of people have escaped poverty.

But such growth comes at a cost. Cities and intensive croplands displace forests and wetlands. Those who pay the heaviest price—women, rural communities, Indigenous Peoples—are often sidelined from decisions on how their natural resources are managed, now and in the future.



The loss of natural capital accelerates climate change.

Myanmar, Indonesia, China, and other Asia Pacific nations have experienced high rates of deforestation, as well as the destruction of carbon-rich ecosystems such as coastal mangroves.

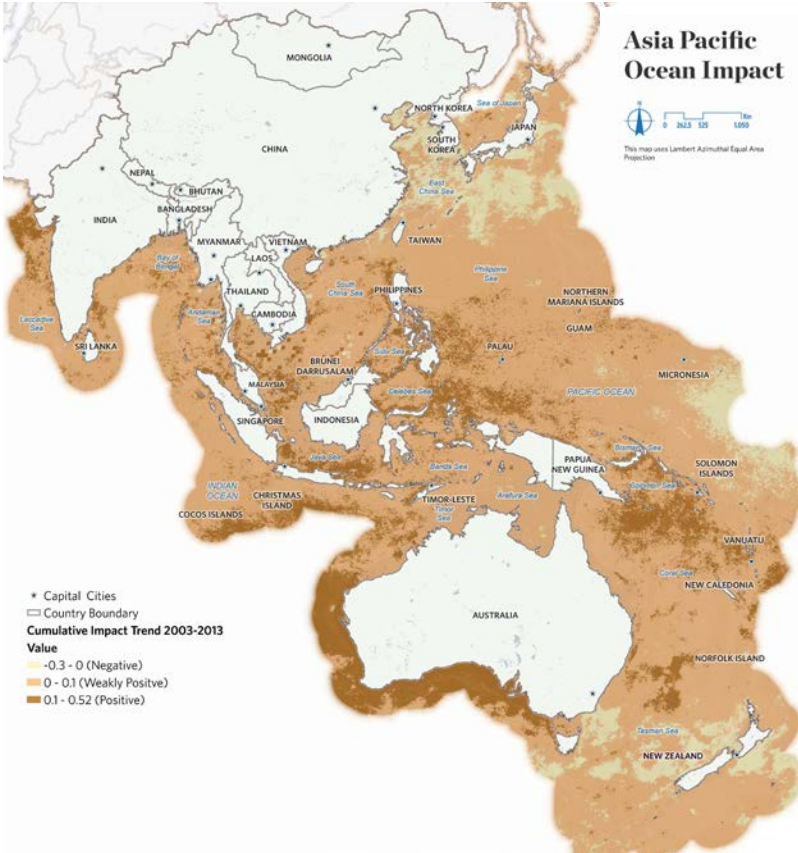
As natural ecosystems disappear, enormous amounts of greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere. And low-lying Pacific Island nations such as Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia are among those most affected by the consequences. "Climate change changes people's culture," says Cynthia Nakozeote, a TNC conservation practitioner in Solomon Islands. "With sea-level rise, flooding, and more tsunami warnings, people are moving inland. But not everyone wants to leave their homes, because they have history there."

Oceans and coastal waters are not immune to economic pressure.

Fishing. Aquaculture. Tourism. The seas and coastlines of Asia Pacific are as integral to culture and economy as its lands.

Yet they are equally threatened by human activity. Overfishing has depleted fish stocks for sought-after species such as tuna and snapper/groupers. Reefs built by shellfish and corals that provide fish habitat and protect coastal cities from storm surge are disappearing. Mangroves at water's edge are uprooted by new development and commercial aquaculture ponds.

The lives of millions of people in Asia Pacific depend upon our collective ability to reverse this decline.





You Are Living in the Defining Decade

The actions we take now—
globally, and in Asia Pacific—
will determine the future of our
world over the next century.
Here's what we're doing:



Left: Lake Wānaka, New
Zealand. © Chun Wui Chau
/TNC Photo Contest 2019

TNC's 2030 global vision comprises these primary goals that contribute to a better future:

1

Climate

TARGET: Remove or sequester **3 billion metric tons** of carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂e) per year—the same as removing 650 million cars from the road.

HOW: Using the power of nature and strength of policy and markets to store carbon, support the renewable energy build-out, and reduce emissions.

2

Oceans

TARGET: Conserve **4 billion hectares** of ocean—more than 10% of the world's ocean area.

HOW: Ensuring the ocean thrives through new and better-managed protected areas, sustainable fishing practices, innovative financing, and positive policy changes.



READ:
TNC partners with the Republic of the Marshall Islands to secure the future of tuna fishing, [via Fast Company](#)

3

Lands

TARGET: Effectively conserve **650 million hectares** of lands, including grasslands, forests, and wetlands.

HOW: Partnering with communities to restore and improve management of working lands, supporting the leadership of Indigenous Peoples as land stewards, and protecting critical forests, grasslands, and other habitats rich in carbon and biodiversity.

“Meeting TNC’s 2030 goals depends, to a large extent, on our work in Asia Pacific. These goals challenge us to be more focused, work with a greater sense of urgency, and level-up our ability to track impact.”

Edward Game
Lead Scientist & Director of Conservation,
TNC Asia Pacific

4

Freshwater/Rivers

TARGET: Conserve **1 million kilometers** of river systems and **30 million hectares** of lakes and wetlands—enough river length to circumnavigate the globe 25 times.

HOW: Engaging in collaborative partnerships, promoting innovative solutions, and supporting policies that improve the quality and amount of water available in freshwater ecosystems and to communities.



READ: [The Yangtze River Conservation in China:](#) TNC China established the Center for Sustainable Hydropower in Beijing to forge more balanced solutions between energy development and the conservation of healthy, productive rivers.

5

People

TARGET: Help **100 million people** who are most likely to be affected by climate-related emergencies such as floods, fires, and drought.

HOW: Investing in nature to improve the health of habitats such as mangroves and reefs that absorb wave energy and equitably protect people in coastal communities.

TARGET: Support **45 million people** who depend on ocean, freshwater and lands for their wellbeing and livelihoods

HOW: Partnering with Indigenous Peoples and other communities to learn from and support their leadership in stewarding the environment, securing rights to resources, improving economic opportunities, and shaping their future.



SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

TNC's 2030 goals align with international agreements and sustainability frameworks: The **Paris Climate Agreement**, which has been signed by nearly every sovereign nation on Earth and a growing list of public and private sector interests, is humanity's shared commitment to limit global temperature rise. The **United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity** aims to agree in 2022 to a proposed global commitment to conserve 30 percent of land and sea by 2030. The **United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals**, adopted by 193 countries, are humanity's pledge to ensure peace and prosperity for people and the planet.

© Getty Images

OUR APPROACH

At TNC, we recognize that how we work is as important as what we achieve.

Guided by the people in the countries where we work, we apply science to identify the most critical places for sequestering carbon, protecting biodiversity, and respecting cultural values.

We develop strategies and test projects in deep collaboration with [local communities](#), [Indigenous Peoples](#), governments, and other partners.

Our rigorous approach to monitoring, evaluating, and learning allows us to advance projects that help us achieve tangible, lasting results.

We take this learning to our global network of colleagues and partners to replicate our best work in more places. By investing locally, collaborating, and demonstrating results, we can access more corporate, financial, and government partners to advance policies and practices to achieve systemic change and drive more resources towards our climate and biodiversity goals.

“Conservation for the coming decades must be founded in authentic partnerships with the Indigenous Peoples and local communities that have traditionally stewarded these places.”

Jennifer Morris
CEO, TNC

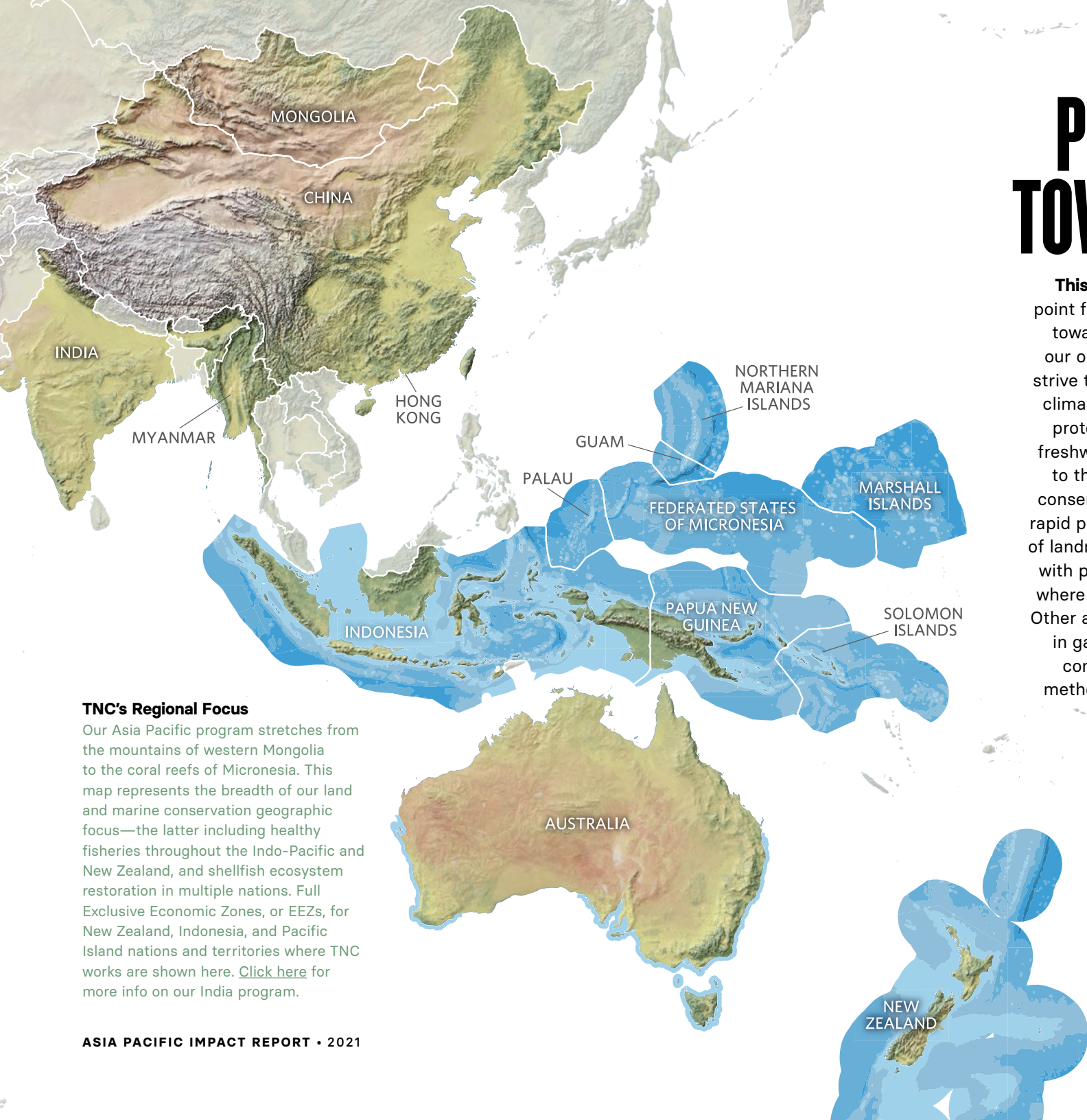
Left: Aerial view of Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia.
© Nick Hall

PROGRESS TOWARD 2030

This report serves as a starting point for TNC Asia Pacific's progress toward regional contributions to our organizational 2030 goals. We strive to provide transparent data on climate adaptation and mitigation; protection of lands, oceans, and freshwater; and measurable benefit to the lives of people across our conservation footprint. Some of the rapid progress detailed is the product of landmark conservation agreements with partners, some in geographies where TNC has worked for decades. Other areas, while smaller or steadier in gains, represent the reality of conservation work—complex, methodical, and demanding vision and persistence.

TNC's Regional Focus

Our Asia Pacific program stretches from the mountains of western Mongolia to the coral reefs of Micronesia. This map represents the breadth of our land and marine conservation geographic focus—the latter including healthy fisheries throughout the Indo-Pacific and New Zealand, and shellfish ecosystem restoration in multiple nations. Full Exclusive Economic Zones, or EEZs, for New Zealand, Indonesia, and Pacific Island nations and territories where TNC works are shown here. [Click here](#) for more info on our India program.



PROGRESS TOWARD 2030

Lands



98 million hectares now protected or under improved management

Oceans



25.2 million hectares protected or under improved management

Climate



7.6 million metric tons CO₂e avoided or sequestered annually

People



Direct impact for good in the lives of more than 45,000 people

TOPLINE, REGIONAL

IMPACT EXAMPLES

75 million hectares of Indigenous lands in Australia savannas and arid lands under improved management

Over 3.5 million hectares of Indonesian forests protected or under improved management

In China, **more than 640,000 hectares** of protected areas created or under improved management as part of the national park system

Protection of **19 million hectares** of Indonesia's oceans through stronger marine spatial planning and support for improvements to the fisheries management model

1,540 hectares of shellfish reefs restored across China, Hong Kong SAR, New Zealand, and Australia that serve as models for replication and scale throughout the region

Early-season fire management in the northern savannas reduces Australia's carbon emissions by **1.4 million metric tons CO₂e/year**

Avoided deforestation and improved management of Indonesia forests reducing emissions by **4.2 million metric tons CO₂e/year**

Annual mitigation of **220,000 metric tons CO₂e** emissions through natural climate solution demonstration sites led by TNC in China

As a result of TNC's work, an estimated **15,000 people** in Solomon Islands and **10,000 people** in Papua New Guinea have improved food security and economic opportunities through equitable and sustainable use of marine and terrestrial resources

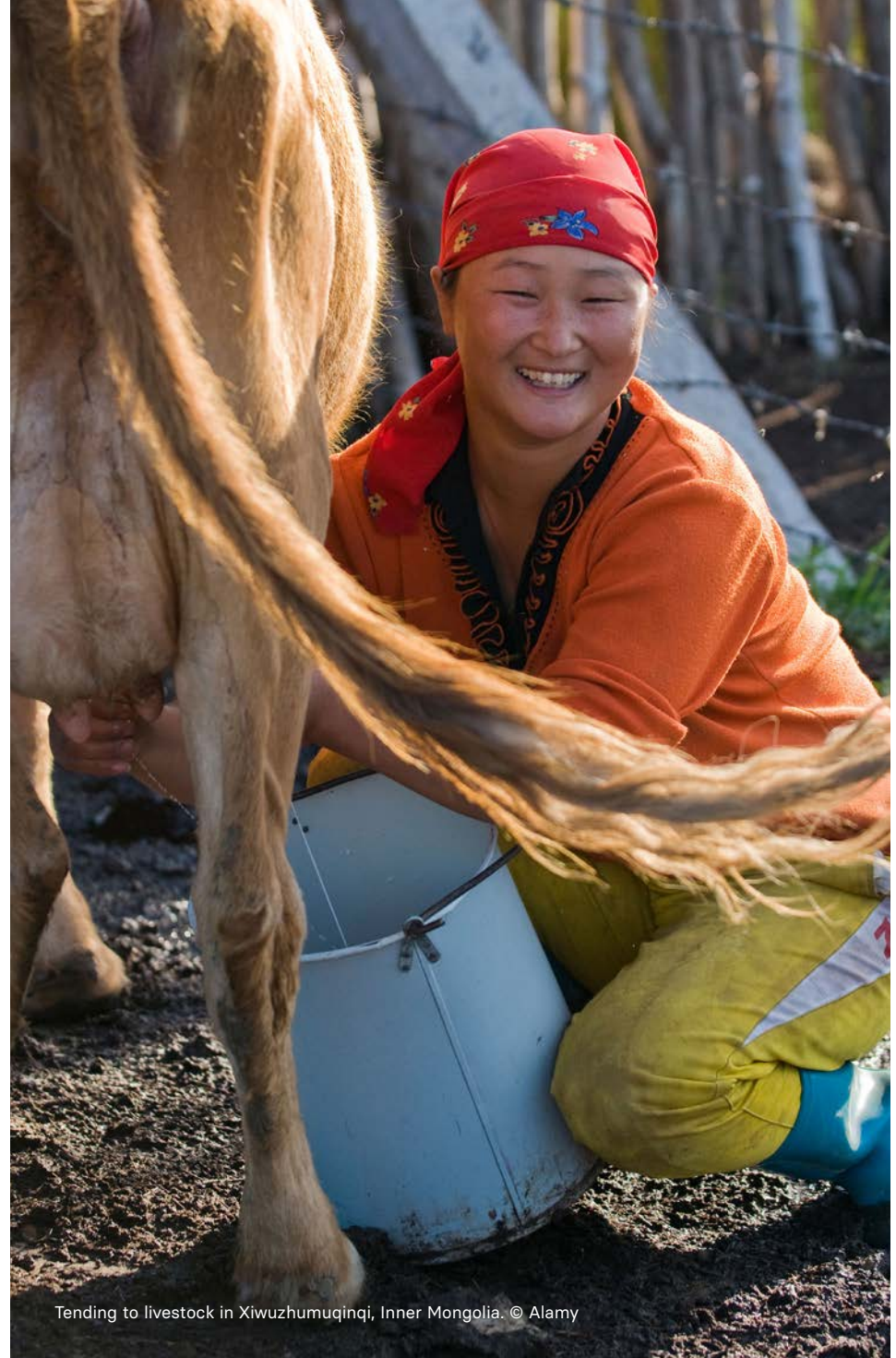
5,000 people in Indonesia directly benefit from protection or restoration of coastal habitats and development of adaptation plans

* Cumulative regional progress as of end of 2021. Contributing strategies vary in starting date.

INTO ACTION

Every conservation project, every community partner, and every donor drives our progress as we strive to achieve these 2030 goals.

Here are just a few examples of our most impactful Asia Pacific work. For more information on these and other initiatives, please contact Maricar Boyle at mboyle@tnc.org.



Tending to livestock in Xiwuzhumuqinqi, Inner Mongolia. © Alamy



Landscape view, Inner Mongolia. © iStock



Preserving a Herding Family's Way of Life

A community-focused approach to sustainable land management

When winter descends across China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Batu and his family face an annual crisis: paying for enough harvested grass to keep their three-dozen cattle from starving in the bitter cold.

The family's grazing areas in Hulunbuir—historically one of the world's most abundant grassland ecosystems—have been impacted by intensive livestock grazing that outpaces the land's ability to regenerate. Hotter summer temperatures and crippling, climate change-driven droughts accelerate this crisis. High winds whip away soil, desert areas encroach, and poorer herding families must borrow money from wealthier neighbors to buy enough grass.

"Often, people like Batu will spend more in forage than they bring in for income," says Sargai Sha, a conservation officer for TNC's Inner Mongolia program. "To pay back what they owe, they are forced to overgraze their lands to make more money for the coming year."

Disrupting this vicious ecological cycle through stronger, community-led grassland management is a key

priority for TNC in China. At stake is not only a centuries-old herding tradition, but also the protection of a massive and unsung carbon sink: **grasslands**. **From the Eurasian Steppe to the American West, they store about one-fifth of all the world's organic carbon through soil and roots.** Preserving these ecosystems and restoring degraded landscapes can improve ecological resilience and reduce wealth inequity.

For over a decade, TNC has partnered with Inner Mongolia communities to improve grasslands management through Restoration by Design—a comprehensive conservation methodology that combines scientific planning, restoration and sustainable management, community development, and ecological monitoring. These activities have restored lands, sequestered carbon, reduced sandstorm impacts, and promoted more efficient use of natural resources in farming, among other benefits. TNC is now promoting this approach to additional project sites across Inner Mongolia.

READ: [The Future of Food](#): Commercial food production is the top threat to nature—and a regenerative system can change that.

TNC'S SHARED WORK HAS DRIVEN OUTCOMES INCLUDING:



• Herders have adopted new spatial and remote sensing technology to determine the best grazing times, locations, and grazing intensity based on current climate conditions.



• Grassland restoration in pilot sites has doubled plant and animal species—a significant outcome for semi-arid areas.



• Afforestation projects (planting trees in lands that did not previously have forest cover) have maintained more than an 85 percent preservation rate. One project, where TNC and partners planted 3 million trees, is expected to capture more than 160,000 tons of carbon over the next 30 years.



• New opportunities for carbon offsets trading are facilitating private investment into current and future work.



• Local farmers who have adopted our land management techniques have seen a 20 percent rise household income.

READ:

TNC's Inner Mongolia project was shortlisted for [the 2021 United Nations Pathfinder Award](#) for innovation in nature conservation.

“After such a short period of time, it’s incredible to see how quickly the shellfish reefs are recovering, turning desolate seascapes into thriving homes for a variety of fish and other species.”

Simon Branigan
East Coast Operations Manager, TNC Australia



The Return of Shellfish

Ecologically vital shellfish reefs get a boost from TNC, the Australian government, and community partners

Over the past century, commercial dredging, overharvesting, and pollution have weakened or destroyed more than 85 percent of the world’s shellfish reefs. The plight of coral reefs may capture more media attention, but losing oyster reefs and mussel beds is no less damaging to our oceans. Acting as nurseries for fish, and filtering sediment and excess nutrients from coastal run-off, these ecosystems are some of the most endangered marine habitats.

We’re still learning just how important shellfish are to global ocean health. But across Asia Pacific, TNC is a leader in advancing new science, partnership models, and best practices for shellfish restoration.

Left: Restoring oyster reefs in Port Phillip Bay.
© Jarrod Board

Among our signature partner initiatives is [Reef Builder](#), a shellfish reef program in Australia that is now the nation's largest marine restoration initiative.

During Australia's first decades as a British colony, oysters were so cheap and plentiful that settlers used their ground-up shells to pave roads. Decades of human impact decimated these vital reef habitats, once home to hundreds of marine species.

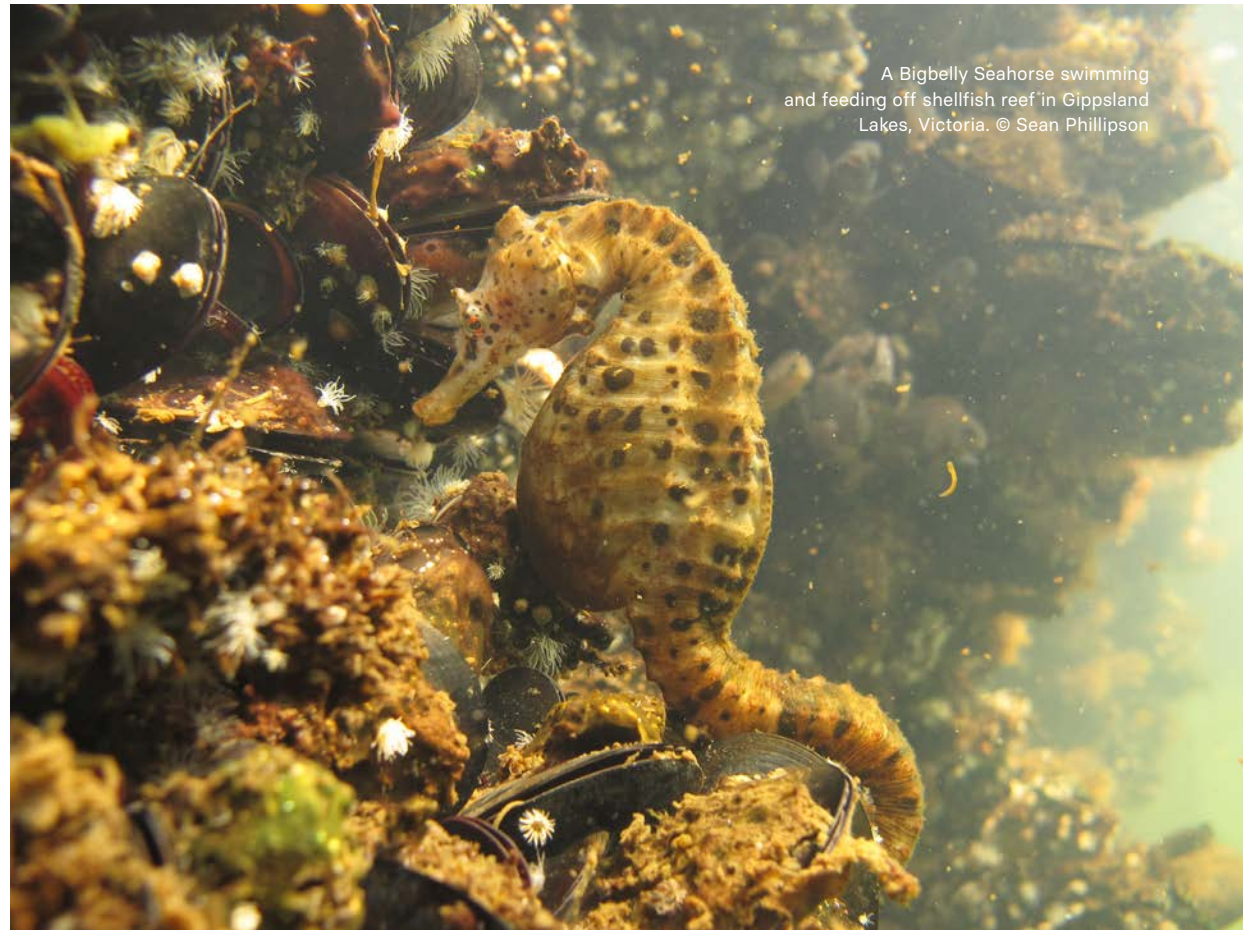
While only about 10 percent of Australian shellfish reefs remain, blue mussels, Australian flat oysters, and other species are remarkably resilient—if given the chance to reestablish. And that's what we're doing. Working with government, business, and community partners, TNC aims to protect and restore 60 shellfish reefs nationwide, making Australia the first country to recover a critically endangered marine ecosystem.

Currently, we're establishing new reefs in 13 locations along the Australian coastline—projects that can create more jobs than traditional infrastructure investments across a diverse group of industries, from maritime construction and aquaculture to natural resource management. After construction, the reefs will provide public benefits such as more marine life, cleaner waters, plentiful fish, and erosion protection.

TNC's decades of experience in shellfish restoration informs this initiative as we also make the economic and ecological case for similar work in [Hong Kong](#), New Zealand's [Hauraki Gulf](#), and coastal China.

READ:

TNC is a proud supporter of [Revive Our Gulf](#), a coalition to replenish mussel beds in New Zealand's Hauraki Gulf.



Every hectare of restored oyster reef (per year) would

FILTER

2.7 B

LITERS OF SEAWATER

REMOVE

225 KG

OF NITROGEN AND PHOSPHATE

RECYCLE

7,000 M³

OF USED SHELL, PREVENTING IT FROM ENTERING LOCAL LANDFILL

PRODUCE

375 KG

OF NEW FISH TO CATCH AND EAT

PROVIDE NEW HOMES FOR

100+

MARINE SPECIES



New Approaches to Protecting Ancient Forests

A world-renowned biodiversity hotspot, Borneo's tropical forests need our help

Through the dense, green canopy of Borneo's tropical forests, orangutans swing from branch to branch, methodically seeking out durians and other fruit, or building their nightly sleeping nests high above. Found only on Borneo and Sumatra, humanity's closest primate relative has lived here for ages alongside the Dayak and other Indigenous peoples.

But since 1950, orangutans have suffered a 60 percent population decline. This loss is primarily the result of global demand for palm oil that has driven agricultural expansion in Indonesia and throughout Southeast Asia. Orangutans' dwindling numbers and secretive existence deep in the forest means even many primate researchers rarely see them in the wild today.

Left: Orangutans in Borneo. © iStock

Orangutans are a focus of our conservation mission and a symbol of TNC's commitment to people and nature in the world's third-largest tropical forest. Our primary in-country partner, *Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara* (YKAN) conceived and implemented a new pathway for forest communities to secure legal rights to manage their lands, preventing incursion from outside interests. More than 20,000 people now directly benefit from this initiative, which protected nearly 16,000 hectares (39,000 acres) of forest lands in 2021—including key orangutan habitat.

With industry partners, YKAN mainstreamed new approaches to timber harvesting that minimize damage to the forest and substantially reduces carbon emissions critical to meeting Indonesia's nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. And our collaborative work to convene a diverse spectrum of stakeholders to protect nature in the province of East Kalimantan now serves as a national model for coalition-building for conservation.

Now, TNC is supporting YKAN in a new strategy with the potential for exponential impact: acquiring the rights to large, inactive logging areas, and managing them sustainably.

In recent years, timber operations in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) have struggled to make a profit, leading to a decline in sufficient management that opens the door to illegal clearing. Abandoned or unstaffed, these concessions are at risk of being cut down to plant oil palm trees and other crops, resulting in permanent forest loss that impacts communities and Indigenous peoples.

Right: Herlina Hartanto © Devan King

“
It's important that the world sees Kalimantan as a global conservation priority. But it's also important to recognize that the way to protect our forests is to work locally. The health of our community and the health of our forests are interdependent.”

Herlina Hertanto
Executive Director, YKAN



Above: Upstream in East Kalimantan. © Bridget Besaw

The national government has responded with a new, multi-business forestry permit. Permit holders can sell forest products other than timber, such as carbon credits and sustainable products such as honey and rattan.

Together, we are working to acquire a substantial timber concession in Kalimantan. Once concession rights are acquired, we will test, demonstrate, and scale sustainable, multi-business forestry models that balance climate mitigation, community wellbeing, and a healthy ecosystem.

Through this new strategy, we can accelerate the pace and scale of forest conservation work to protect our best, last chances at slowing climate change and preserving biodiversity.

SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS
Contact Maricar Boyle at mboyle@tnc.org for more information on how you can support TNC's Asia Pacific program—from membership in our Legacy Club to appreciated assets. There are so many ways to support this mission.



In the Solomon Islands,
the birth of a local
conservation movement.
© Tim Calver for TNC



Who Decides Nature's Future?

For too long, women have been denied a voice in conservation. By supporting women leaders across Asia Pacific, we're committed to changing this

Sometimes, seismic shifts in conservation can appear as commonplace as this: a group of women, ranging from 25- to 70-years old, sitting together in an outdoor pavilion in Solomon Islands. These are the members of the local women's community group KAWAKI. It's an acronym comprising the first two letters of three local villages in a remote part of this Pacific Island nation known as the Arnavon Islands. The Arnavons include a chain of small islands that are home to the South Pacific's largest nesting beaches for critically endangered hawksbill turtles. Here, these women are charting the group's progress, holding an election, and teaching younger members about ecosystem degradation, climate change, and local threats from mining.

Such a convening here was once unheard of. Women working in the conservation field or raising their voices about natural resource management are still threatened with violence and accusations of sorcery. At best, women have been ignored when local leaders, all men, decided how community natural resources would be managed—or exploited.

But things are changing in Solomon Islands, thanks to the women of KAWAKI. Beginning in 2016, TNC helped local women to advance gender equity in conservation efforts and slowly create a platform to elevate women's voices. Since then, KAWAKI has grown from a few members to more than 300. Their efforts to educate children and communities about sustainable land use and climate change has led to growing cultural acceptance of women's role in conservation. KAWAKI members are now called on by village leaders to share their perspectives on important land use decisions, including mining sites. Women are beginning to work alongside men in conservation fieldwork and lead biodiversity research for the Arnavons.

TNC's collaboration in Solomon Islands demonstrates how addressing gender equity through conservation can lead to more inclusive and enduring environmental outcomes. And it's just one example of how we're advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in Asia Pacific.

In 2021, TNC's Asia Pacific program codified a commitment to ensure that equity and inclusion are central to both our conservation work and our own workplaces.

A dedicated network of gender and equity focal point members across all our programs are undertaking projects to create more inclusive conservation programs and safer, more equitable workplaces.

READ:

Asia Pacific Gender Advisor Robyn James speaks about the importance of gender equity in a 2021 [New York Times feature](#).



“

We didn't know how much gender inequality could impact our conservation work. Now that we do, it's our responsibility to share this information and make sure our teams are prepared.”

Gertie Tang

Director of Human Resources for TNC China



Carbon Markets, COP26, and Asia Pacific

In 2021, China launched a national carbon market that could eventually cover more than 70 percent of all national carbon emissions. Only weeks later, delegates at the United Nations climate summit (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland finally reached a deal on advancing new international rules for carbon trading. Both these breakthroughs enable businesses and governments around the world to make climate-friendly investments on a much greater scale.

Market demand for carbon offsets has been growing in recent years, with Hong Kong, Singapore, and other Asian financial centers leading the charge. TNC's role in advising governments and companies is based on our conviction that, with the right rules and social safeguards in place, markets can help boost investment in nature-based solutions, such as improved management and restoration of forests, grasslands, wetlands, and coastal ecosystems.

Left: Morning over Pak Nai, a TNC shellfish restoration site in Hong Kong. © TNC Photo Contest 2019; **Below:** Asian elephant. © iStock

Staying the Course in Myanmar

Ensuring the health and welfare of [working elephants](#) in Myanmar's timber industry is central to our program in this Southeast Asian nation, home to some of the world's most biologically rich forests. While TNC's national-level work has been paused following the political turmoil beginning in February 2021, we remain steadfast in our support of local communities, working elephants, and the *mahout* families responsible for their care. Despite current challenges, TNC continues to improve access to elephant veterinary care. We're strengthening a national database to track working elephants, improve their well-being, and decrease poaching and trafficking. In concert, we are supporting communities around the country committed to protecting their local lands.

In New Zealand, an Indigenous Alliance for Nature

For centuries, the Māori people lived in New Zealand's epic lands, rivers, and coastlines. They exercised *kaitiakitanga*—an intricate cultural system founded on the belief that all people are guardians of nature, not mere consumers of its bounty. This worldview guided how fish were caught, crops were planted, land was preserved, and wildlife protected.

Based on this philosophy, in 2021 TNC joined 14 partners to form the *Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance*, meaning “Collective Action for Our Nature.”

The Alliance aims to secure the best possible conservation outcomes for people and nature on New Zealand’s South Island (Te Waipounamu). “The Nature Conservancy brings independence, proven international experience leading landscape conservation programs, and access to the latest research and thinking in conservation, economic, and social tools that can make working at this scale possible,” says Martin Rodd, Co-Chair for the Alliance. “I see our partnership with TNC as game-changing for achieving our vision.”

WATCH:

Kotahitanga mō te Taiao’s [mission to protect](#) New Zealand’s iconic South Island.

Reducing Wildlife Conflict in Mongolia

Called the “ghosts of the mountains” in traditional Mongolian lore, snow leopards are some of the world’s most elusive large cats. About 1,000 leopards, or one-quarter of the world’s population, roam the mountainous areas of western Mongolia, where they hunt wild sheep, marmots, and other animals. But these solitary animals are coming into increasing conflict with traditional herding communities in the pasturelands below.

About 170,000 families rely on traditional livestock herding for their primary livelihoods. When larger herd sizes overburden wild grazing areas and water sources, traditional prey are pushed out, and snow leopards shift their focus to domestic goats and sheep. Retaliatory killings of these cats, while rare, affect the survival of this vulnerable species.

TNC’s Mongolia program partners with herders across the country and community-based organizations that are best positioned to advance sustainable land management practices in grasslands where overgrazing has been a problem. To help reduce wildlife-herder conflict, we’ve deployed camera traps and GPS collaring to understand where and when snow leopard attacks on livestock are most common.

And with nearly two-thirds of herders near Sutai Nature Reserve in the Western Atlai Mountains reporting that snow leopards are a threat to livestock, TNC is working with communities here to introduce solutions such as livestock insurance programs and predator-proof corrals to reduce herd loss.

A New Model for Sustainable, Equitable Tuna

From skipjack to yellowfin, tuna is a key natural resource for Micronesia, a sprawling island region in the



Western Pacific Ocean. With global demand for fish expected to double by 2050, small island nations here have worked with TNC to strengthen monitoring and root out illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing that jeopardizes fish stocks. Now, we’re working together to help ensure island communities get their fair share of economic returns.

In a new initiative launched last fall, TNC is partnering with the Republic of the Marshall Islands to transform the tuna supply chain via [Pacific Island Tuna](#), a new joint venture that will supply Marine Stewardship

Council-certified canned tuna to Walmart stores across the US.

Pacific Island Tuna’s business model positions Pacific Islanders to participate equitably in global tuna supply chains and intends to direct 100 percent of long-term net profits back to Pacific Island governments and communities.

For more information on how you can support our work in Micronesia, contact Trina Leberer at tleberer@tnc.org.



Hawksbill sea turtle hatchling, Solomon Islands. © Tim Calver



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 **Maricar Boyle** at mboyle@tnc.org.

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