



CONSERVATION OPTIMISM

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

ABOUT CONSERVATION OPTIMISM

Conservation Optimism is working to foster hope, action and empowerment within conservation by changing a discourse dominated by apathy, gloom, and despair. Capacity building is at the heart of what we do, so we engage with a diverse community across our social media channels, in-person events, and virtual webinars. We empower grassroots movements through our Regional Hubs and support conservationists and young people around the world through bespoke training, toolkits, and educational infographics. While Conservation Optimism has been around as a movement since 2016, we were thrilled to become a UK charity in 2022 and we are looking forward to scaling up our work in the next year.

OUR MISSION

People around the globe are working hard to preserve our planet's future. The reality they face can feel insurmountable: wild nature is declining rapidly, and Earth's life support systems are under increasing stress. As ecosystems erode and human responses appear inadequate, it can be tempting to throw one's hands up in despair.

Yet, if we zoom in on this bleak panorama, a colourful mosaic appears. In amongst the stories of loss, there are inspiring stories of regeneration and change, nature making a positive difference to people's lives, and humans valuing and nurturing their natural environment. These stories are key to securing our planet's future. We need to learn from them, replicate them, and build a world in which nature and people can coexist.

Our mission is to amplify these stories of conservation optimism, large and small, to inspire change. This is critical at a time when we need everyone to act for nature. Our research indicates that untempered narratives of "doom and gloom" can lead people to disengage, while positive and solutionsbased framing can inspire action. By working to shift the narrative and support conservationists, we can empower people from all walks of life to make a difference for the planet.

WHO WE ARE

Conservation Optimism is a global team composed of our Director, our Board of Trustees, and our volunteers. We are so grateful to all our international team members who donate their time to help us achieve our mission and are incredibly proud to now have regional hubs in India, Pakistan, and the UK.



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THEORY OF CHANGE



SUPPORTING AND EQUIPPING CONSERVATIONISTS

FOSTERING WELLBEING & COMMUNITY

SUPPORTING YOUNG CONSERVATIONISTS

We teamed up with the Whitley Fund for Nature in 2021 to create a toolkit titled '[Pearls of Wisdom for Budding Conservationists](#)'. It contains bits of advice from 13 Whitley Award Winners and dives into topics such as collaboration, communication, leadership, project management, fundraising, and wellbeing. The page has been viewed almost 1,500 times since it went live in February and the English version has been downloaded over 500 times. The toolkit has since been translated into Portuguese, Thai, and Swahili as well thanks to the help of volunteers.

PROVIDING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Our UK Hub put a strong focus on running internships through the University of Oxford in 2022 and worked with the Internship Office to run various micro-internships throughout the year. The Micro-Internship Programme offers two to five-day voluntary learning and development opportunities, which aim to develop their employability skills, add to their CV, and offer them the opportunity to make new professional contacts.

We hosted a total of [13 interns in 2022](#), most of which came through the Micro-Internship Programme. They focused on developing content for our [Kids' Corner](#) in collaboration with different partners such as the RSPB, Seabird Watch, and Exploring By The Seat of Your Pants. Some of them also had the opportunity to develop explainer infographics for Nature Positive Universities. We always want to champion the importance of effective communication and so those internships are a great way for us to share our expertise with students.

"In the future, I wish to pursue a career in science communication and journalism, as I hope to educate others on emerging areas of research and make a difference.

This micro-internship has therefore given me invaluable experience."- Natalie Bright, 2022 Micro-Intern



YOUNG PEOPLE & ECO-ANXIETY



We developed some new sessions this year around the topics of eco-anxiety and resilience and delivered them to university students, school children, and young people around the UK. In those sessions, we dived into what eco-anxiety actually is using some of our [Good Natured Podcast](#) episodes and then had a brainstorm with the different groups to find out what techniques they use to cope when they feel eco-anxious. The artwork on the left shows what teenagers from the Cheney School in Oxford reported they wanted their ideal world to look like.

OUR NETWORK

Webinars & Workshops: We ran a total of 11 webinars and three workshops in 2022. All the webinars were then uploaded on YouTube. We found that the webinars provide a great way to put a spotlight on different members and allow them to share their work with our global audience.

Mentoring programme: We launched our mentoring programme this year but the participation was pretty low so we have paused the mentoring programme for now and will be reaching out to our members to see what we could do to make it better in the future.

Members: We were also excited to grow our network to 165 members this year with the first additions of organisations from Belize, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, and Panama.

REACHING OUT

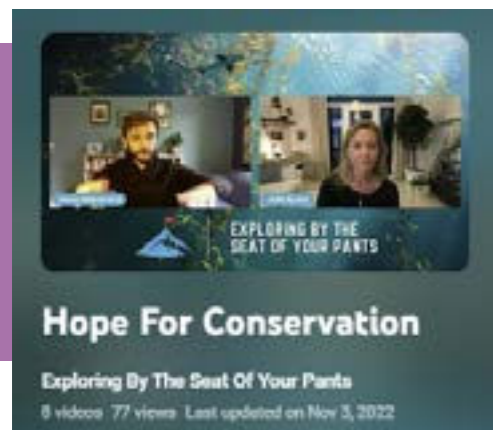
One of our goals for 2022 was to bring our ethos to a broader range of audiences and so we ran various sessions on the topic of optimism and resilience this year including for the Communicate Conference, the Student Futures and Research Conference, the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Oxford Brookes University, the University of Oxford, UNESCO, the Royal Geographical Society's Douglas Adams Memorial Lecture, YOUNGA 2022, and the Chester Zoo Youth Symposium. We also had the opportunity to give a speech at the opening of the REBEL for LIFE exhibition at the Old Fire Station in Oxford, which allowed us to address members of Extinction Rebellion.

CELEBRATING DIVERSE CHANGEMAKERS

PUTTING A SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATIONISTS

We are always passionate about amplifying the amazing work being done by conservationists around the world. One way we do this is by producing content for our Kids' Corner so that children around the world get to hear about the conservation projects that are making a difference for the planet.

We produced two series of resources for our [Kids' Corner](#) in 2022. The first series was all about seabird conservation and was done in partnership with Seabird Watch and RSPB. The resources were produced by our December 2021 cohort of University of Oxford micro-interns. The series has proved quite popular with some of the resources having been downloaded over 1,800 times.



Our second series of content was titled Hope for Conservation and was a collaboration with Canada organisation Exploring By The Sea of Your Pants and the IUCN Green Status of Species. The Hope for Conservation series was created to showcase all the good being done by conservationists around the world to ensure a future for wildlife. This partnership included [a series of talks](#) that classrooms around the world were able to tune in to hear from scientists who have been involved with the IUCN Green Status of Species. We then designed resources about each of the species those scientists work on so that children could have some fun resources to keep them engaged after the talks. We onboarded eight micro-interns in the summer as part of this project to help us create some of the resources. The series went live at the end of October and has been a big success and Exploring By the Seat of Your Pants has recorded a tremendous turnout in terms of classrooms taking part in the talk series with 300 classes ranging from grade 2 (7 years old) to post-graduate students with a total of at least 6,000 kids tuning in on the live from the US, the UK, Canada, China, Uganda, Sri Lanka, India and the Philippines.

BLOGS

[Blogs](#) help us amplify our community's voice and promote their stories within the wider Conservation Optimism community. Anyone can write a blog and our contributors are welcome to submit a blog in any language.

Our Blog Team has grown in 2022 and we have started diversifying our content. The team now writes podcast summaries and book reviews in addition to our 7 Stories of Optimism weekly series and our guest blogs. We have also put a stronger focus on youth blogs as well with our [youngest blogger](#) being an 11 year-old environmentalist from Kenya.

SOUTHEAST ASIA AWARDS

This year we were excited to collaborate with ConservationNOW member East-West Center to support a contest to recognise and honour the efforts and achievements of the Southeast Asian people who made a positive difference to the environment. The goal of this first-ever [Conservation Optimism Southeast Asia Awards](#) was to support motivated SEA's youth to be more eager in combating climate change and environmental issues. The winners of this first edition were:

- Land: Lan Thi Kim Ho of Save Vietnam's Wildlife
- Water: Fadli Azmi of Siginjai Youth Action
- Air and Climate: Ariestelo Asilo - Varacco Inc "Coffee Internet of Things"
- Cities: Devirisal Djabumir - Dream School of Indonesia
- People's Choice Award: Sheherazade - PROGRESS
- Sulawesi Regional Ecological Conservation



TRANSFORMING CONSERVATION STORYTELLING

2022 FILM FESTIVAL

The fourth edition of our Good Natured Short Film Festival was a success with over 200 people attending the event in the Oxford Museum of Natural History. We were thrilled to have four shortlisted filmmakers in the room with us who accepted to take part in our first-ever Q&A with the filmmakers and even had two of the conservationists featured in the films present as well.

The winners for this fourth edition of Good Natured were Noah Erni (Overall Winner, Public's Favourite, and Animation Winner), Mei Fujimura (Student Winner), Jerry van de Beek and Betsy De Fries (Life on Earth Winner), Kika Tuff (People & Nature Winner). All the winners were awarded with mentoring sessions with experts from the industry such as Osnat Shurer, the producer of the Academy Award®-nominated films, "Raya and the Last Dragon" and "Moana."



Here is what our Overall Winner, Noah Erni, had to say about the film festival:

"Being part of the Conservation Optimism Festival was a great pleasure. Even though I couldn't attend the event in person, the communication with the festival was really nice and very welcoming. I was then totally overwhelmed when I heard that our film "The Invention of Less" was the Winner of the Animation section as well as the Public's Favourite and also the Overall winner. Further the mentoring session with Osnat Shurer, which was the prize in the Animation section, was a great experience. I had the chance discuss with Osnat a project idea and get a very personal insight in the production at Pixar. So I would recommend everybody to submit your films at the Conservation Optimism Festival!"

Overall, the feedback we received was extremely positive with participants rating their overall experience as 4.6 out of five. Many respondents flagged how much they enjoyed the Q&A with the filmmakers, which was a new addition to the format of the festival. The films were then uploaded to [our YouTube channel](#) and have been viewed by over 1,000 people so far.



Credit: Gabriella Carr

We also partnered with UK Youth for Nature, the UK's leading youth-led network calling on the politicians & governments of the UK to take urgent action and tackle the loss of nature, this year for the art exhibition part of the festival. The art exhibition included a series of bug hotels designed specifically for the event to highlight the plight of insects in the UK and a series of photographs that were collated through their youth network. The virtual exhibition can be accessed [here](#).

“It was a huge honor being included in the Conservation Optimism festival - and expanding my community! Conservation Optimism is a wonderful organization and a force for good in the

The film festival then went on tour this year, with screenings taking place in Goa, India, through our India Hub and in Kingali, Rwanda, as part of the Africa Protected Area Congress.

ADDING TO THE EVIDENCE BASE

We co-authored a scientific paper entitled "Communicating the Biodiversity Crisis: From "Warnings" to Positive Engagement", which builds on our [Positive Communication Toolkit](#). This paper has been published as a 'Conservation in Action' piece in the journal of [Tropical Conservation Science](#).



BRIDGING BORDERS

Our Pakistan and India Hubs launched a series of webinars titled 'Beyond Borders' this year. The idea is that each webinar is composed of a mix of speakers from both India and Pakistan and covers a topic that is relevant to both countries. So far the Hubs have run three of those webinars and they were each well-attended throughout the year. Topics of conversations have included wetlands conservation, bear conservation, and river dolphin conservation.



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