Annual Report

2023

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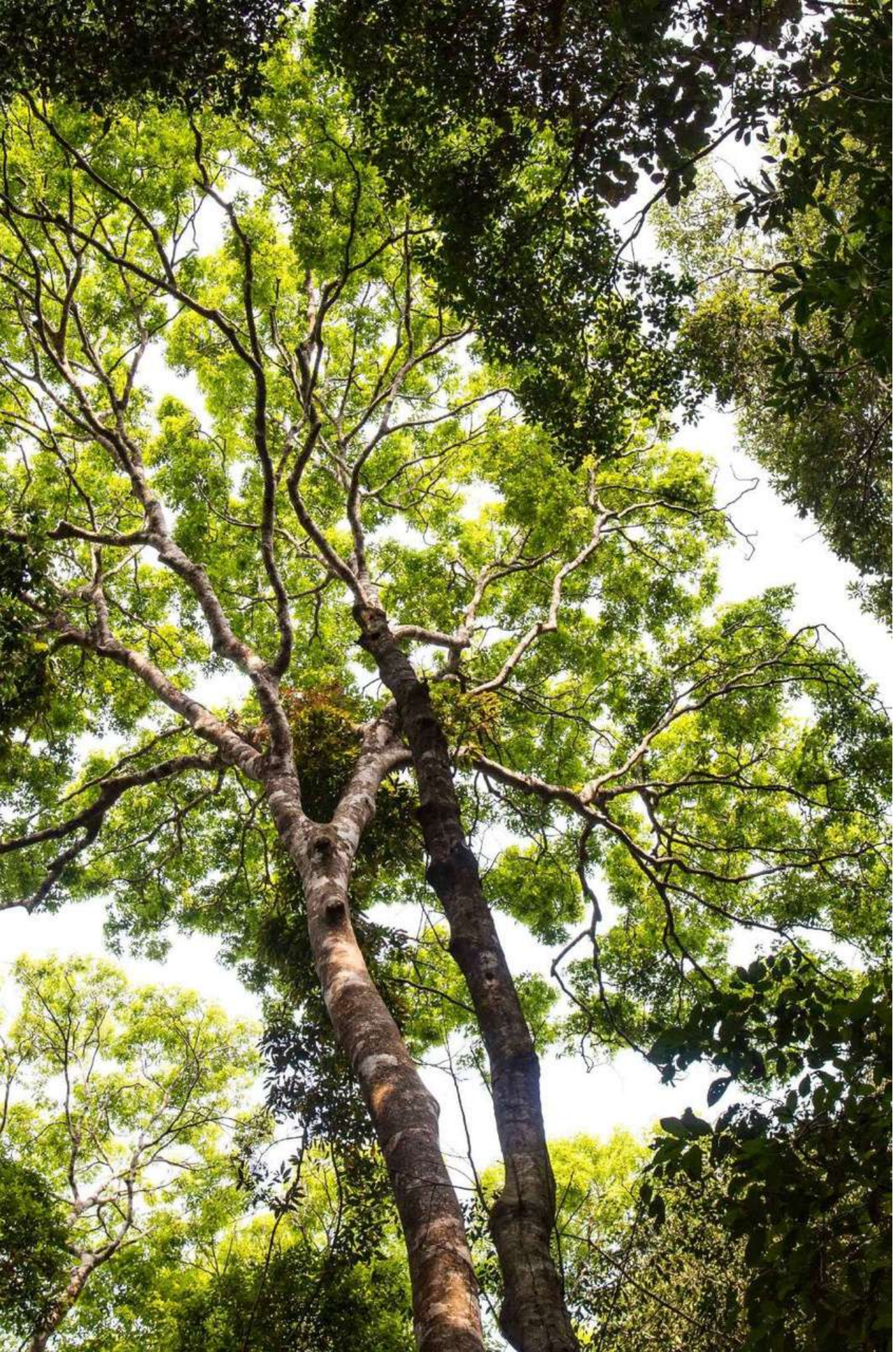

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Foreword

Dear friends, supporters, colleagues,

I am pleased to share our annual report for 2023 with you all. As for the past nine years since our foundation, 2023 has been full of adventures, celebrations, and challenges!

Looking back, 2023 was particularly busy with our programs on biodiversity research and monitoring and community sustainable livelihoods.

We completed our fieldwork to collect elephant dung to study Nakai's resident population dynamic and genetic diversity. Samples will now be analyzed in a laboratory in Europe in collaboration with technical partners, and we expect results at the end of 2024, which will greatly contribute to future conservation planning for Elephants in Nakai.

We completed the third systematic replicate of the camera-trap wildlife monitoring program for Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, which once again testifies to the importance of the national park for the long-term survival of several species, including several endemics to the Annamite Mountains.

We completed a pilot research on the Endangered Wolf Barb *Luciocyprinus striolatus*. *We* show that Nakai-Nam Theun National Park is the most important site in the world for the long-term survival of this species.

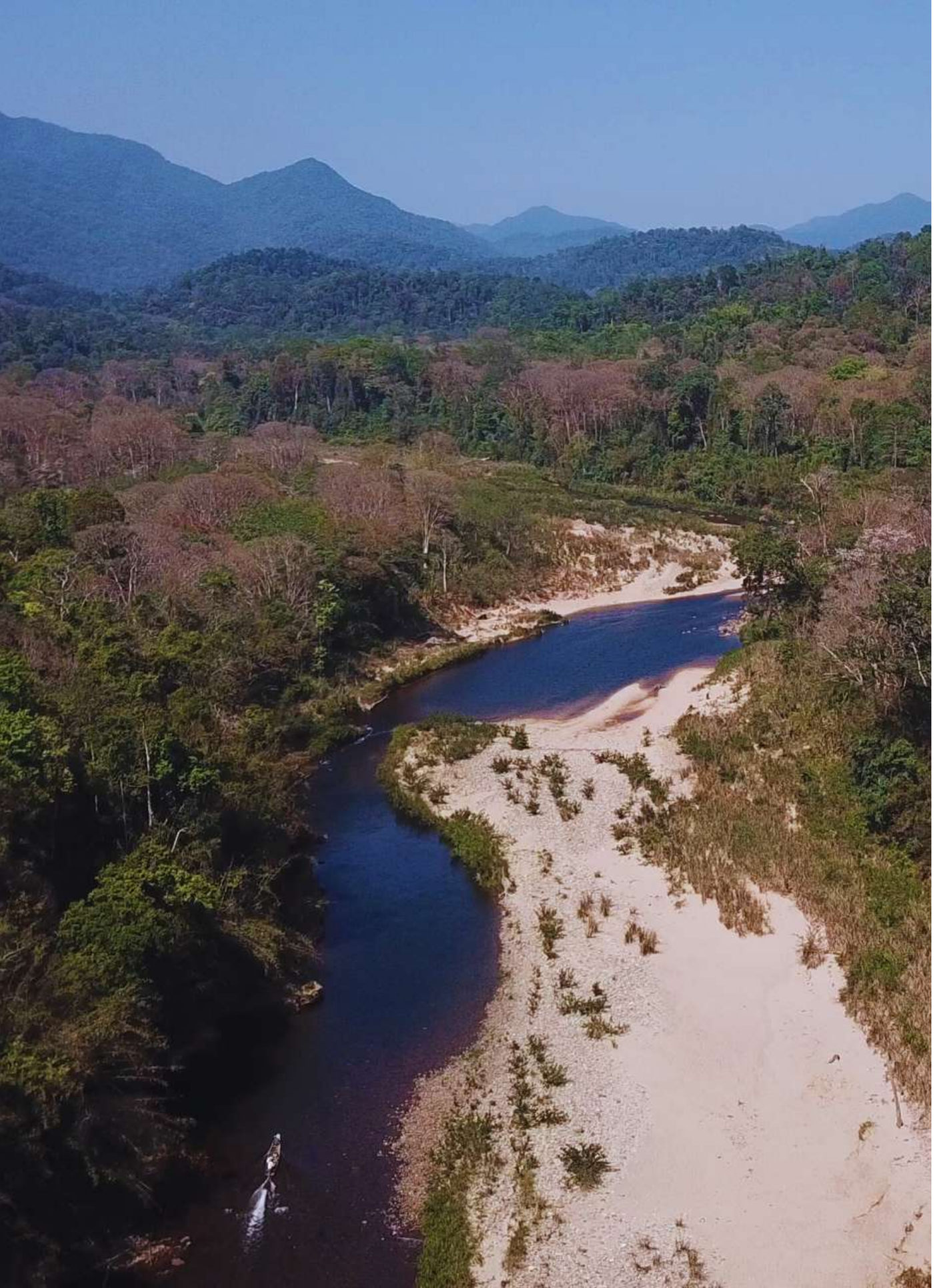
Meanwhile, on the front of our community sustainable livelihoods program, we have seen considerable progress from the communities in developing their business enterprise focusing on traditional handicrafts and their participatory sustainable use and management of natural resources. While these have contributed to increased villagers' income generation from handicraft sales, they have also contributed to awareness of the sustainable use of natural resources among the community and the conservation of traditional crafting skills of the ethnic minority we are supporting. With our community-based approach, we strive for the program's long-term sustainability.

Of course, our achievements were only possible with the dedication of our team and the collaboration with government partners, technical partners, and donors. We are immensely grateful for the continuous endorsement and support from all of you!

We look forward to 2024, which will undoubtedly bring new adventures, celebrations, and challenges!

Camille,

Laos, January 2024



About us

Association Anoulak (***conservation*** in Lao language) is a French-registered association dedicated to the long-term nature conservation in the Annamite Mountains of Laos and the support of human local communities for resilient livelihoods.

Our mission is to develop and implement innovative, multidisciplinary and sustainable approaches to the long-term conservation and study of the biodiversity and ecosystems in the Annamite Mountains of Laos, with a skilled, passionate and dedicated team of nationals and internationals.

Our Team

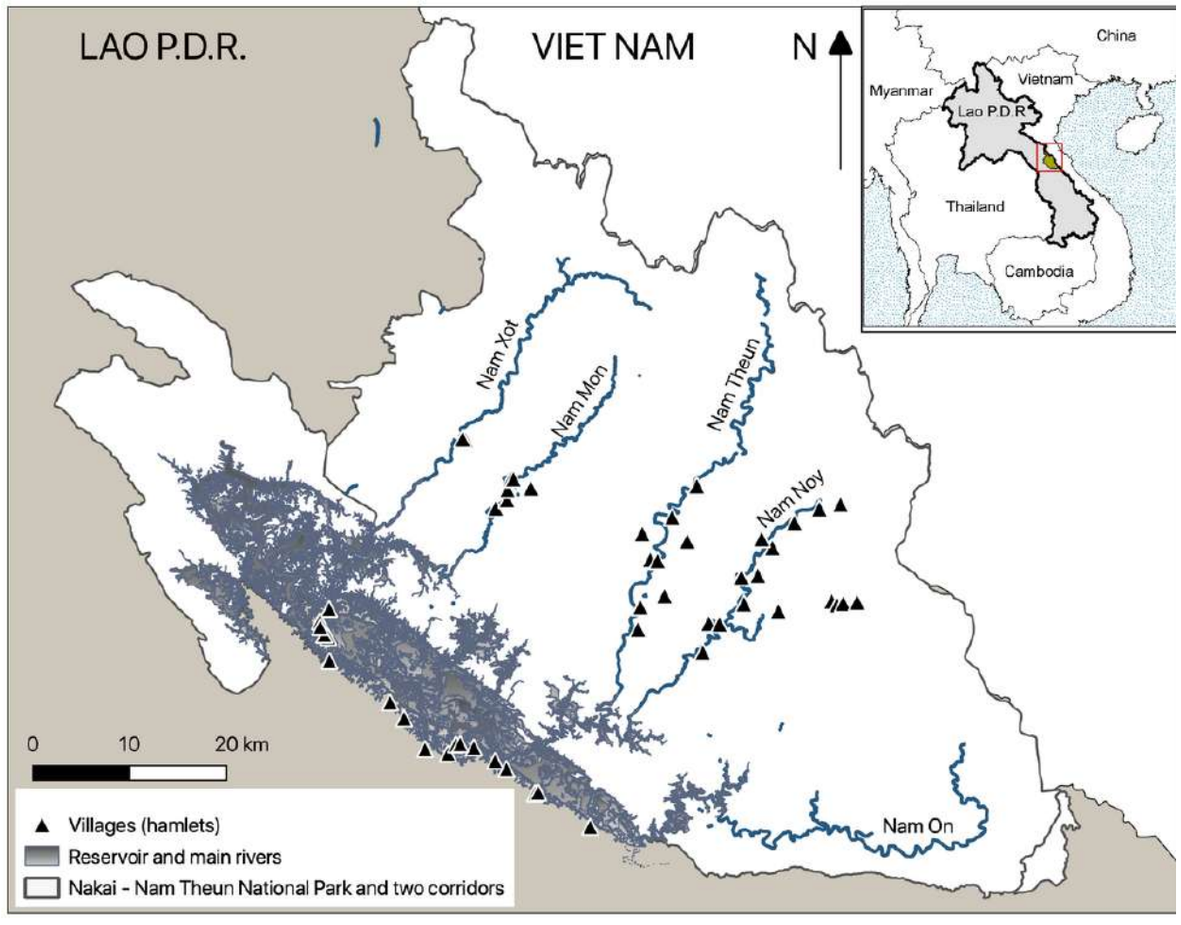
In 2023, Association Anoulak employs 12 persons (7 women): 1 foreigner and 11 Lao nationals:

- Ms. Dr. Camille Coudrat - Association Anoulak's Founder and
- Director
- Ms. Dr. Lampheuy - Community Program Manager
- Ms. Sisamay - Community Program local leader
- Ms. Laythong - Community Program officer
- Ms. Latdaphone - Community Program officer
- Mr. Khongphet - Community Program officer
- Ms. Keo - Wildlife Research Fieldwork and Community Program officer
- Mr. Ouphakhone (Done) - Wildlife Fieldwork officer
- Mr. Chaolor - Wildlife Research Fieldwork officer
- Mr. Khammai - Wildlife Research Fieldwork officer
- Mr. Khantaly - Wildlife Research Fieldwork officer
- Ms. Meesouk Phetsomphou - Accountant

In addition in 2023, Association Anoulak supports financially as part of our programs:

- Eight village facilitators as part of our community sustainable livelihoods program

Zone of intervention: The Annamite Mountains of Laos



The **Annamite Mountains** extend from northern Viet Nam along the border area with Lao PDR and south into southern Viet Nam. The region is a b**iodiversity hotspot** renowned for its high level of **endemic species of fauna and flora**, variety of ecosystems, and characteristic geophysical and climatic patterns.

The **Nakai – Nam Theun National Park**, located in east central Lao PDR within the Annamite Mountains, provides a case study of the rich biodiversity of the region and the threats it is facing.

Many large wildlife species have already gone extinct from Nakai – Nam Theun in the past two decades. This is due to the intensive trade-driven wildlife hunting that is widespread in the region.

However, **Nakai – Nam Theun is still considered one of the most important protected areas for its conservation significance at the national and global level**, a well as for its diversity of human ethnic minorities. The conservation of this highly diverse area will only be possible with a strong commitment from the government of the Lao PDR for long-term management actions.

What we do, since 2024:

- ***Biodiversity research and monitoring for conservation***

  Objective: to understand the distribution, monitor wildlife populations and to increase our knowledge on in-situ species ecology and status of the threatened and endemic species in the Annamite Mountains which will inform conservation management

- ***Community anti-poaching patrols (taken over by National Park in 2023)***

  Objective: to reduce illegal poaching of species in the wild, allow their populations to remain stable or recover from unsustainable hunting

- ***Conservation awareness***

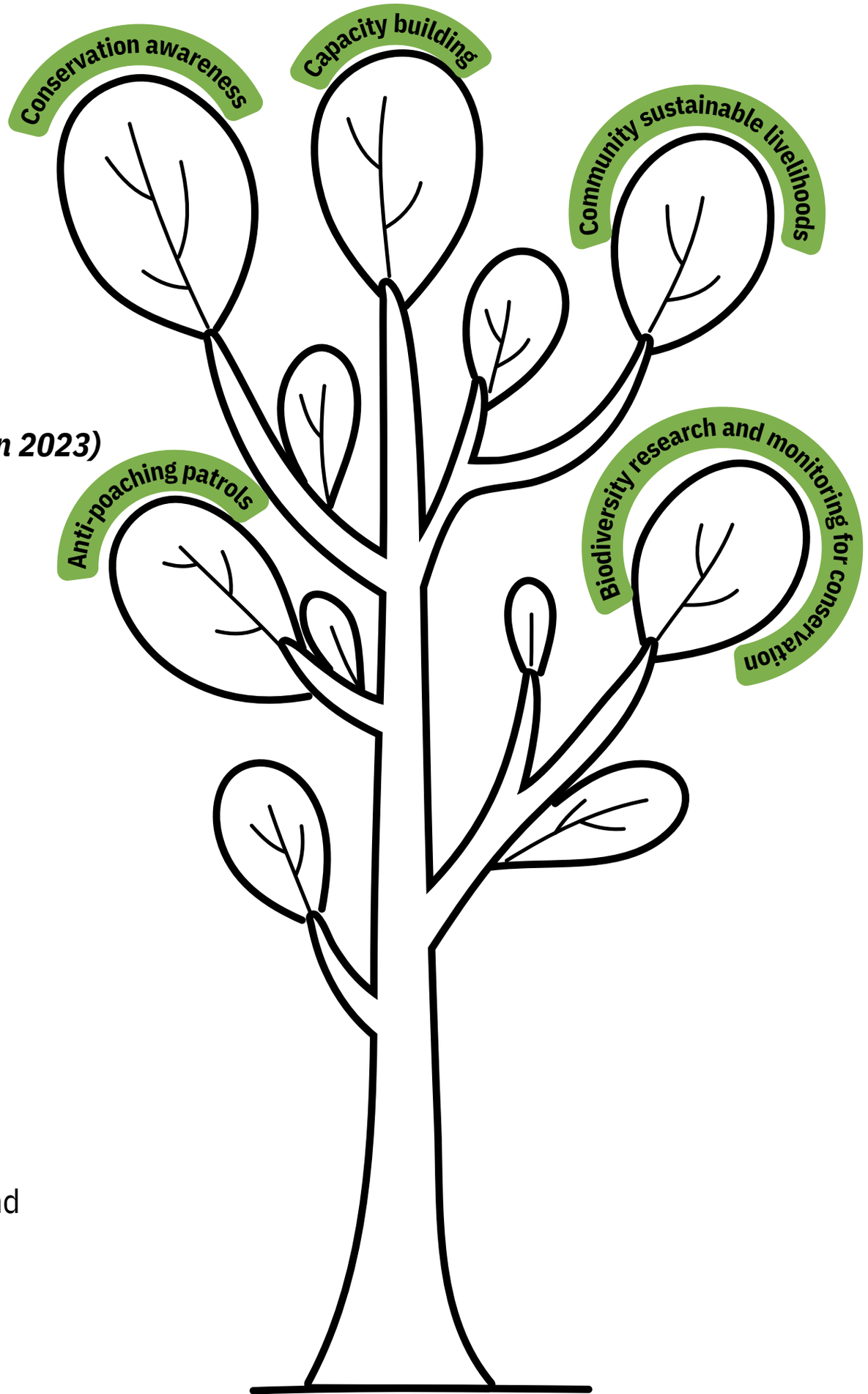
  Objective: to raise awareness of the local and international community about the biodiversity of the Annamite mountains and the importance of protecting it.

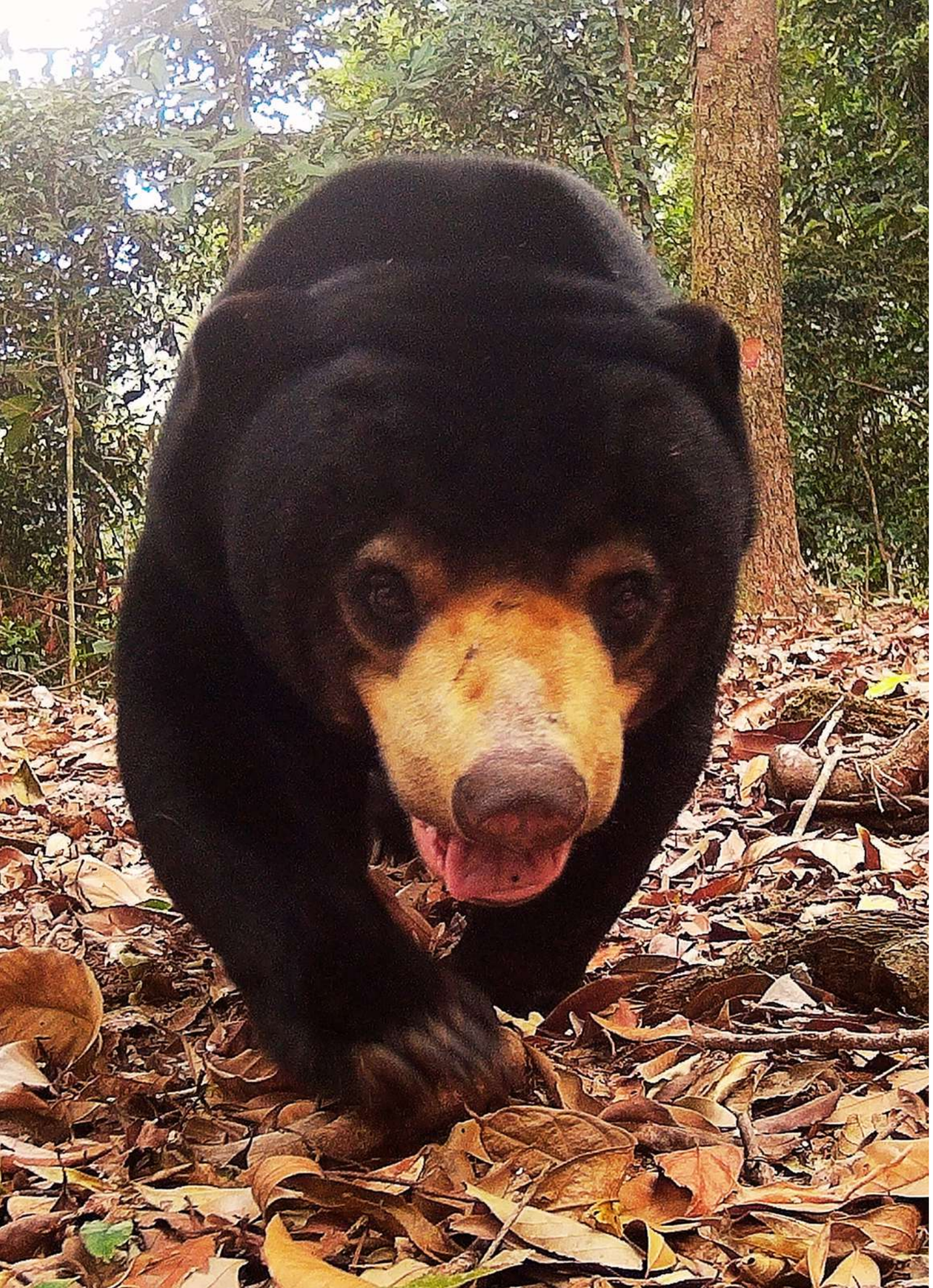
- ***Community sustainable livelihoods***

  Objective: to provide alternative and sustainable livelihoods and income to local communities to reduce their reliance on natural resources

- ***Capacity building***

  Objective: to inspire and train the new generation of Lao conservationists and biologists and ensure the sustainability of and sense of ownership of all our projects at the national level





Biodiversity research and monitoring in 2023

White-cheeked Gibbons (*Nomascus siki/N. leucogenys*) distribution

Project technical partner:

CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Rationale: The current taxonomic status and distribution range limit of the population of gibbons occurring in Nakai-Nam Theun remains uncertain. It may hold both the Northern and Southern white-cheeked gibbon and/or a hybrid population. To better plan conservation actions on these species, it is crucial to know their distribution across the landscape. Because gibbon vocalizations are species specific we are recording gibbon calls in as many sites as possible across Nakai-Nam Theun, which we will identify to species.

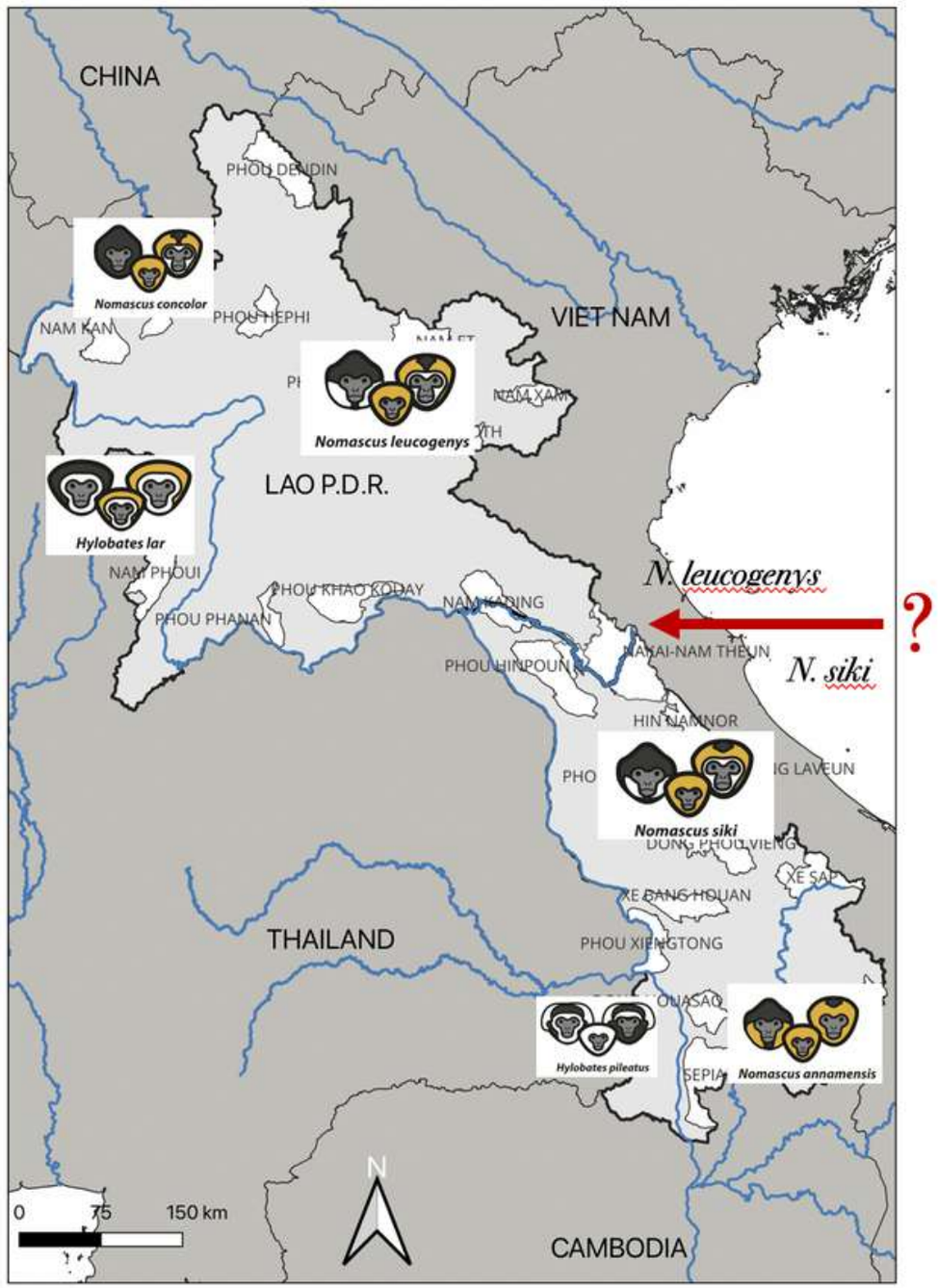
Our objective is to **identify the species occurring in the national park region**, distinguishing the Northern White-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*) and Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (*N. siki*), their **occurrence and distribution across the national park region and in central Laos**

We collaborate with Dr. Hradec M. and colleagues from the Czech Republic University of Life Science for data analysis.

Since the beginning of the project:

- We collected a total of **60 gibbon recordings** from different locations in **Nakai-Nam Theun National Park**
- We obtained another **30 gibbon call recordings from partner organizations** and researchers working in sites in **central Laos and Vietnam**
- We obtained **acoustic samples of genetically-screened gibbon individuals** of both species from **zoological facilities in Europe** to strengthen the statistical analysis.

In **2023**, we **processed all data for analysis**.



White-cheeked Gibbons (*Nomascus siki/N. leucogenys*) distribution

Total of **90 recordings from the wild**:

- **48 to the NORTH of the Nam Kading-Theun river**
- **42 to the SOUTH of the Nam Kading-Theun river**

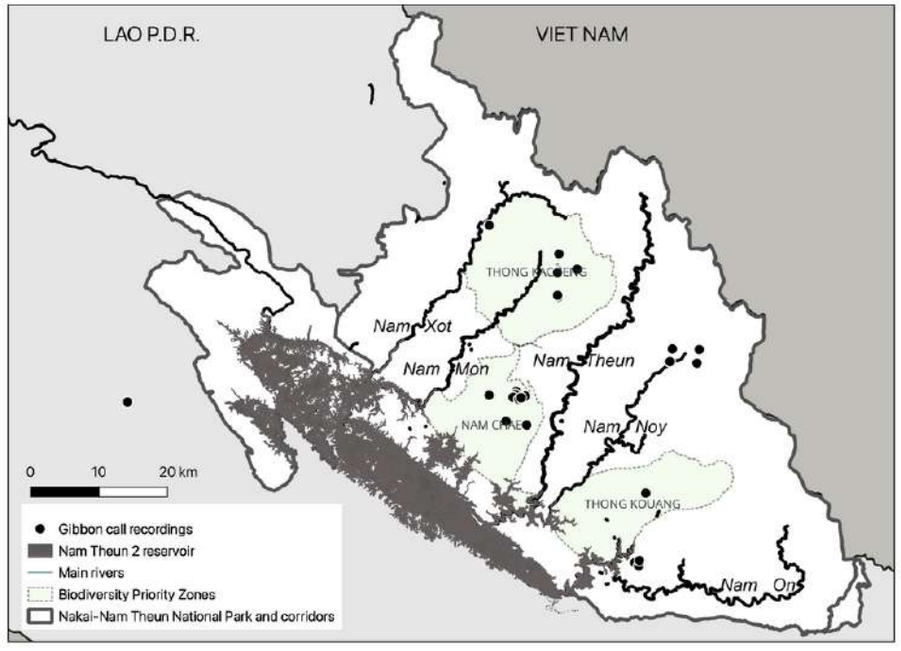
Our preliminary analysis made a distinction of the vocal samples based on the acoustic parameters used:

- Male calls have a higher variability than females
- Female great call is similar in both species

There was a **higher percentage** of vocal samples (male and female) associated to ***N. leucogenys*** **NORTH** of the Nam Theun-Kading river

There was a **higher percentage** of vocal samples (male and female) associated to ***N. siki*** **SOUTH** of the Nam Theun-Kading river

However, the **Nakai-Nam Theun National Park** seems to be **a transition (or hybridization) zone** between the two species: reinforce the importance of this national park for long-term conservation of both species

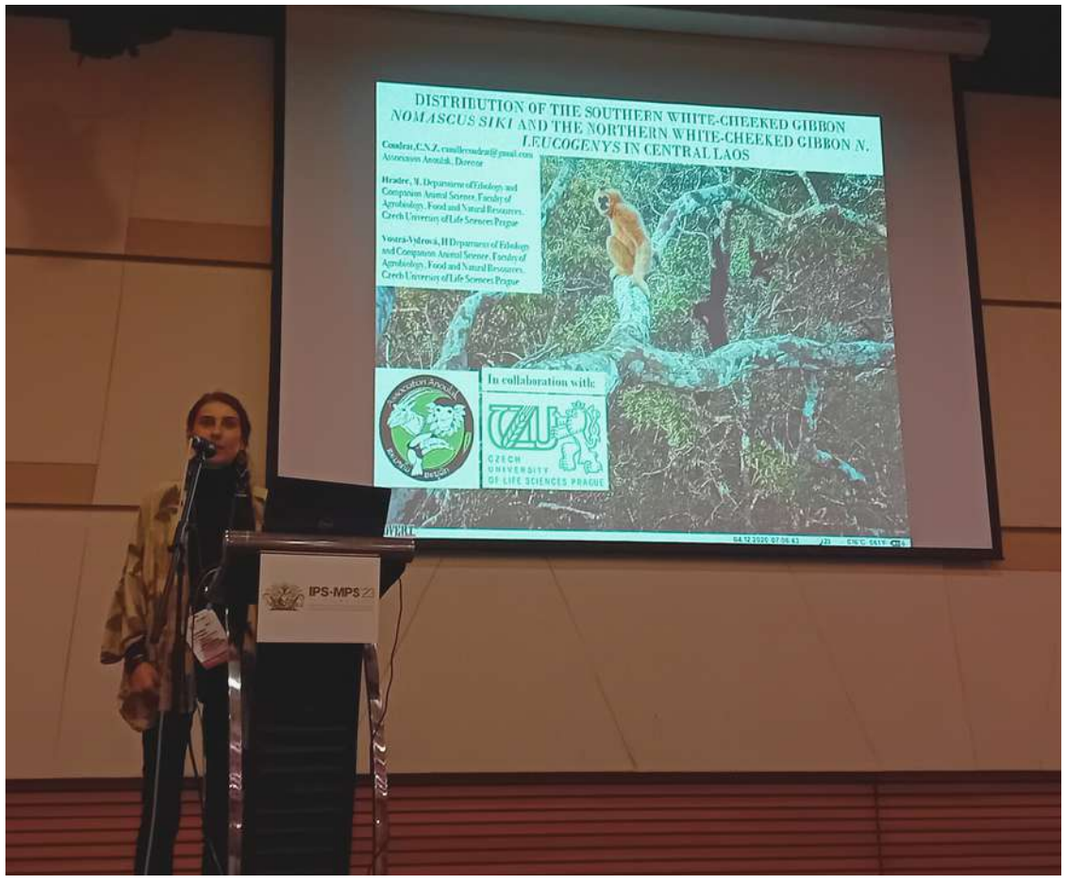


Gibbon calls we recorded from Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, and used in the final analysis

Gibbon calls obtained from partner organisations recorded in the wild in Laos and Vietnam from 2008 to 2021, and used in the final analysis

White-cheeked Gibbons (*Nomascus siki/N. leucogenys*) distribution

In **August 2023**, we presented this work at the International Primatological Society Congress 2023 in Kuching Malaysia.



Gibbon survey methods development

Project technical partners: University of St Andrews; Rainforest Connection

Rationale: Gibbons are some of the most threatened primates in the world, due to habitat loss, illegal pet trade, and hunting for food and traditional medicine. All twenty species of gibbons are threatened with extinction on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: five are Critically Endangered, fourteen are Endangered, and one is Vulnerable. Effective conservation measures and actions to mitigate threats to gibbon populations require accurate and precise estimates of their abundance, distribution, and population trends. However reliable survey methods are lacking.

Acoustic surveys are the most applicable method for gibbon, as they produce territorial calls that can be heard from large distances. Acoustic survey methods (with human detectors) have commonly been used to survey gibbons but there is subjectivity in the data from these surveys as they require surveyors to estimate gibbon locations without ever seeing them, resulting in unreliable abundance estimates. **There is also no existing standardized survey protocol and/or analysis method, which prevents long-term population monitoring across time and space.**

In 2020, we initiated a new **collaborative project between Association Anoulak, The Centre for Research into Ecological and Environmental Modelling (CREEM), University of St Andrews in Scotland, and Rainforest Connection** with the aim to produce and test affordable, easily deployable **acoustic recorders** that generate data designed for use with cutting-edge statistical abundance estimation methods, to **estimate gibbon abundance**.

In **2023**, our technical partners at the University of St Andrews and Rainforest Connection have been **developing both the software and hardware of the first prototype** that will be tested in Laos in January 2024.

Dr. Oedekoven (St. Andrew University) presented this work at the **International Primatological Society Congress 2023 in Kuching Malaysia in August 2023** to introduce these new digital recorders with synchronised clocks and multiple microphones which are able to provide estimated directions to sound sources accurately, and to show how this improves density and abundance estimation, using acoustic spatial capture-recapture methods.

Wildlife populations monitoring with systematic camera-trap surveys

Project technical partner:

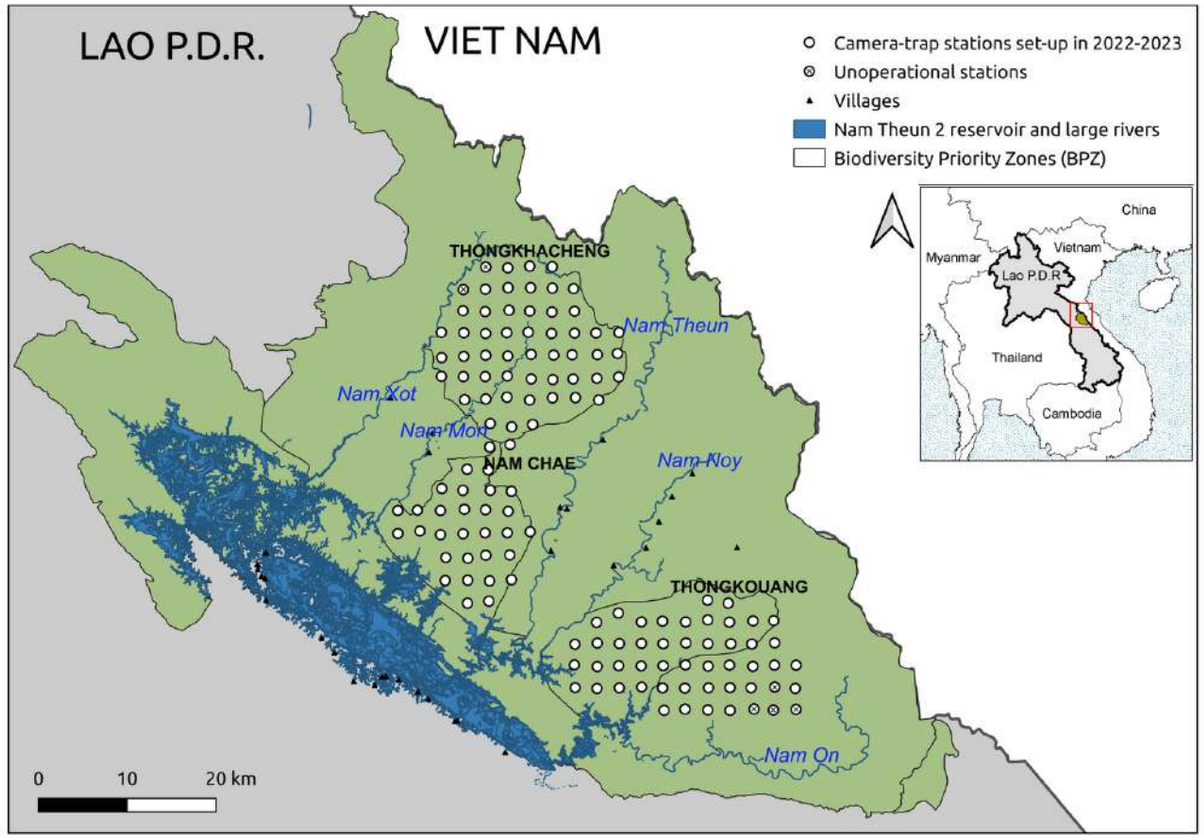
Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research
IN THE FORSCHUNGSVERBUND BERLIN E.V.

Rationale: The current conservation status of several globally threatened species remains unknown in Nakai-Nam Theun. In addition, in order to evaluate the management efforts (especially patrol efforts) being implemented it is critical to obtain baseline population estimates of key indicator species and monitor their populations trend over time.

Since 2017, Association Anoulak has been providing **technical advise and supervision to the Biodiversity Research and Monitoring Section of the National park**, including the camera-trap wildlife monitoring program.

Because of this widespread and intensive snaring, within the Nakai – Nam Theun National Park, some mammal species have declined significantly including most cats and some other small carnivores. It is therefore imperative to adopt a **conservation strategy** for Nakai-Nam Theun National Park that includes **sites prioritization** where most of the resources for protection (e.g. anti-poaching patrol and law enforcement) are directed and where biodiversity is systematically monitored to **assess the effectiveness of conservation interventions to protect biodiversity**.

The **survey design for the camera-trapping** implemented in Nakai – Nam Theun National Park follows the rationale and protocols developed by the Biodiversity Dynamic research Team at the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW) (Abrams et al., 2018), one of our research partners.



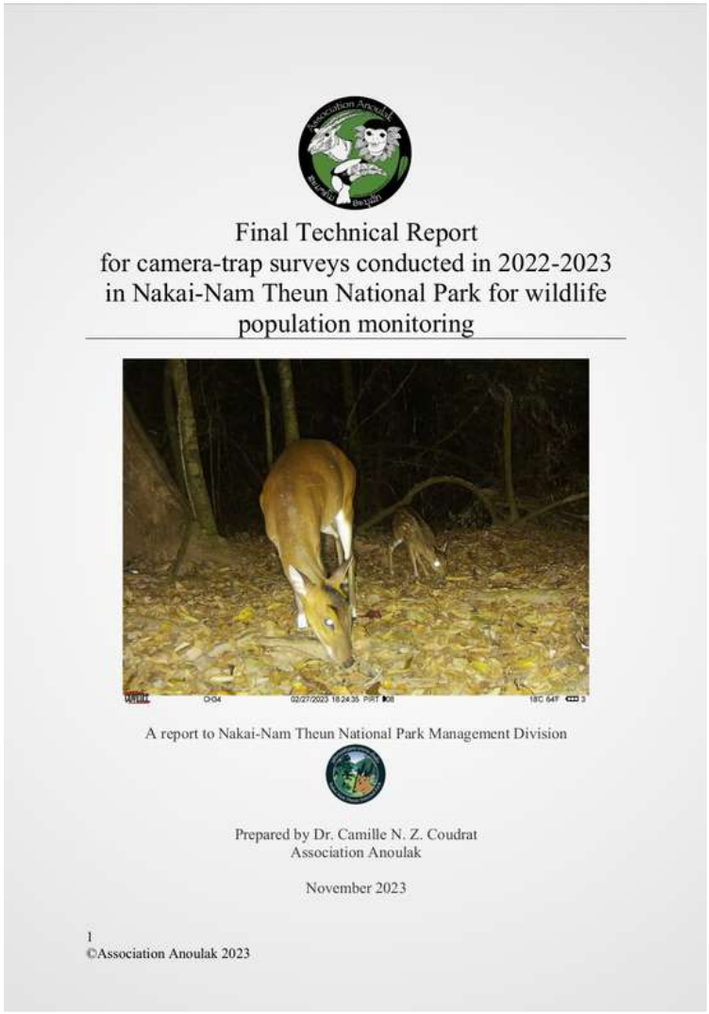
Overall wildlife monitoring survey in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park landscape implemented in 2022-2023, including 134 camera-trap stations (128 operational) and 253 cameras (239 operational)

Wildlife populations monitoring with systematic camera-trap surveys

In **2023**, we implemented the **third systematic camera-trap wildlife monitoring survey in the three identified Biodiversity Priority Zones** of the national park (the base line survey was conducted in 2018-2019, the survey was replicated in 2020 and again in 2022-2023).

For the **entire survey conducted over 2022-2023**, the **total survey effort was 22 645 active camera-trap nights** (a camera-trap night is here defined as each night a single camera is active; i.e. for the total number of operational cameras). A total **128 camera-trap stations** were operational with a total **239 operational cameras** (14 cameras were non-operational)

A total of **36 taxa were identified at the species level**. Of all taxa recorded, **17 are classified as Globally Threatened** (i.e. Critically Endangered; Endangered; or Vulnerable), two as Globally Near Threatened and one as Globally Data Deficient by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN, 2023).


Final Technical Report
for camera-trap surveys conducted in 2022-2023
in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park for wildlife
population monitoring

A report to Nakai-Nam Theun National Park Management Division

Prepared by Dr. Camille N. Z. Coudrat
Association Anoulak

November 2023

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©Association Anoulak 2023

Final report: *Coudrat, C.N.Z. 2023. Final Technical Report for camera-trap surveys conducted in 2022-2023 in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park for wildlife population monitoring. Report prepared and presented to Nakai – Nam Theun National Park Management Division. Association Anoulak. Lao PDR*

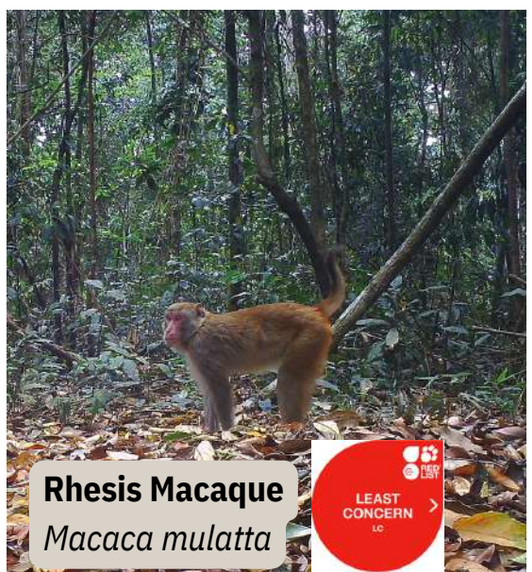
Wildlife populations monitoring with systematic camera-trap surveys

This study revealed **several species of high conservation value and notably five endemic species to the Annamite Mountain range**. Of particular importance in terms of their endemism to the Annamite Mountains and therefore requiring special conservation interventions across their range, are **CR Large-antlered Muntjac**, **DD Roosevelts'-group Muntjac(s)**, **EN Annamite Striped Rabbit**, **EN Owston's Civet** and **CR Red-shanked Douc**.

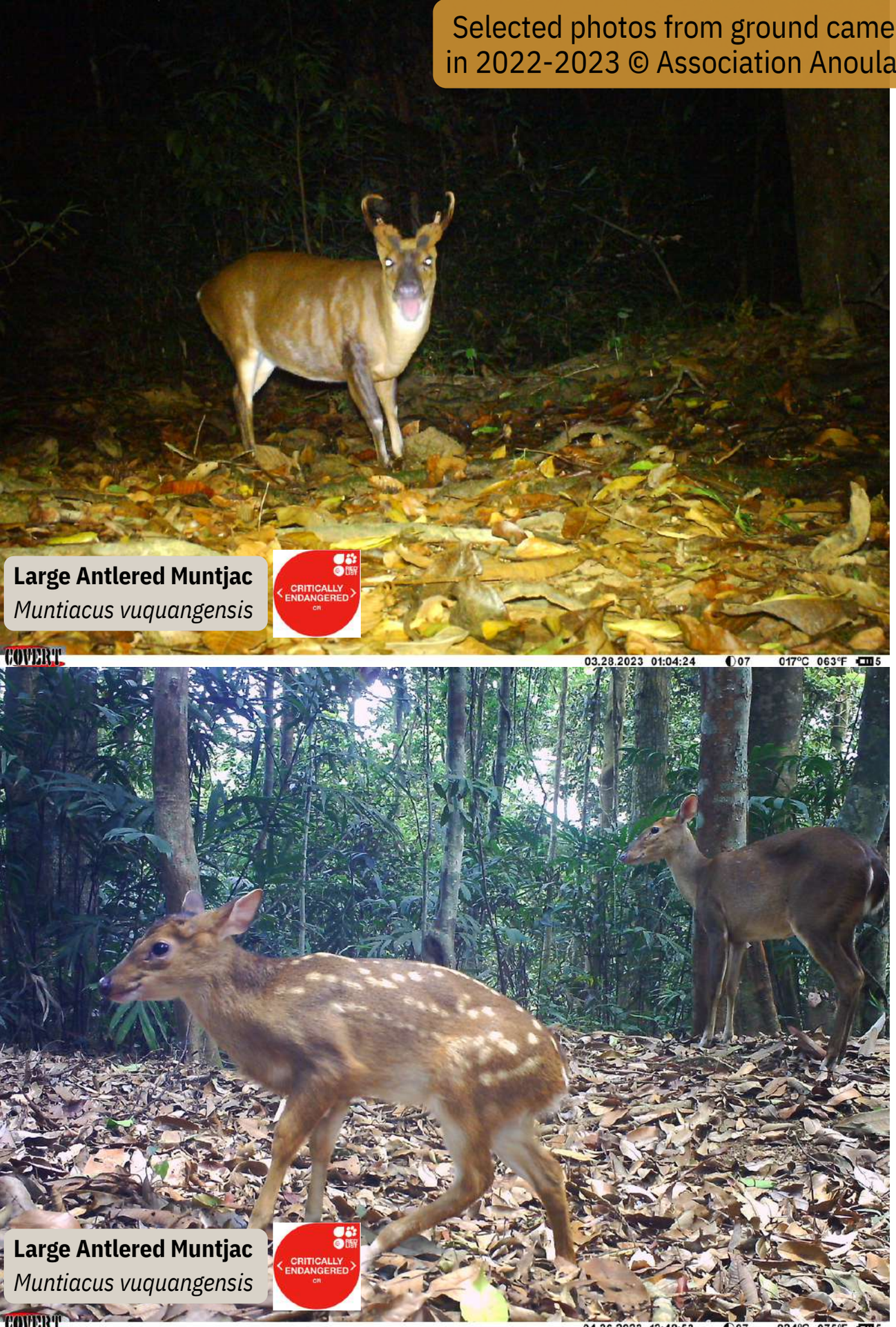
In addition, **other species of high conservation value** recorded during this survey that have been particularly impacted by over-hunting across their range and particularly in mainland Southeast Asia are **CR Pangolin(s)**, **EN Asian Elephant**, **EN Hatinh Langur**, **EN Bengal Slow Loris**, **EN Pygmy Slow Loris**, **VU Greater Hog Badger**, **VU Binturong**, **VU Sun Bear**, **VU Sambar**.

Other species of conservation value that could have been expected based on range but were not recorded are Clouded Leopard, Marbled Cat, Asiatic Golden Cat. These species are some of the most sensitive to intensive snare-hunting and have already gone locally extinct in several sites in mainland Southeast Asia.

This study once again **highlights the importance of Nakai-Nam Theun National Park as a priority area for biodiversity conservation** in the Annamites, and demonstrates the utility of using **camera-trapping approach to establish a robust monitoring program of mammal communities in the National Park**.



Selected photos from ground camera-traps monitoring survey conducted in 2022-2023 © Association Anoulak and Nakai-Nam Theun National Park



Selected photos from ground camera-traps monitoring survey conducted in 2022-2023 © Association Anoulak and Nakai-Nam Theun National Park

Roosevelts'-group Muntjac(s)
Muntiacus cf. rooseveltorum

COVERT 03.25.2023 08:08:37 04 019°C 066°F 6

Mainland Serow
Capricornis sumatraensis

VULNERABLE VU

COVERT CH39 04/02/2023 16:27:23 PIRT 12 18°C 64°F 5

Sambar
Rusa unicolor

VULNERABLE VU

Selected photos from ground camera-traps monitoring survey conducted in 2022-2023 © Association Anoulak and Nakai-Nam Theun National Park

Sunda Pangolin
Manis javanica
CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
CR

Annamite striped rabbit
Nesolagus timminsi
ENDANGERED
EN

COVERT 02.13.2023 19:22:59 ◑23 017°C 063°F

Owston's Civet
Chrotogale owstoni
ENDANGERED
EN

COVERT CH54 02/27/2023 22:12:04 PIRT ◗08 09°C 48°F 6

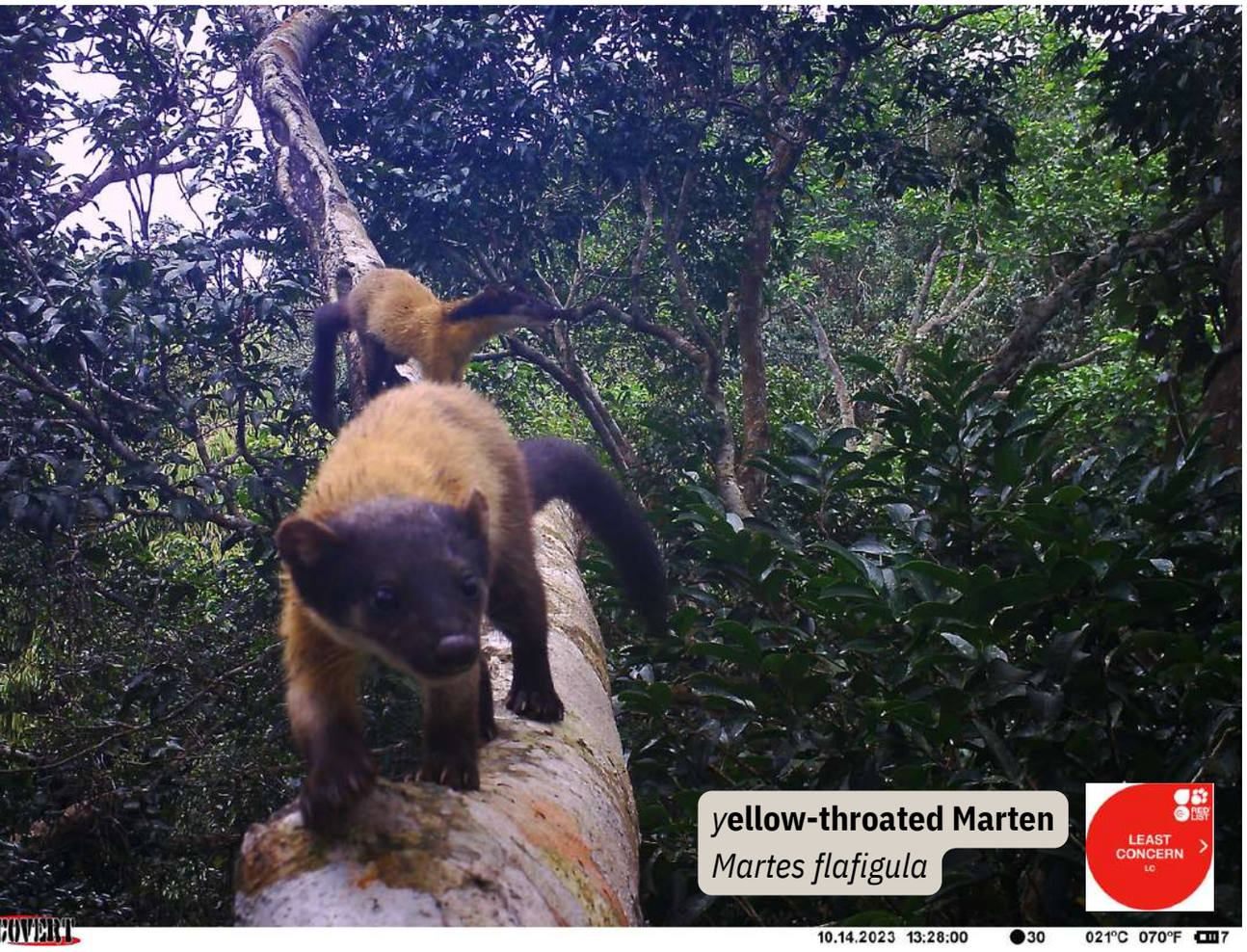
Hatinh Langur
Trachypithecus hatinhensis
ENDANGERED
EN

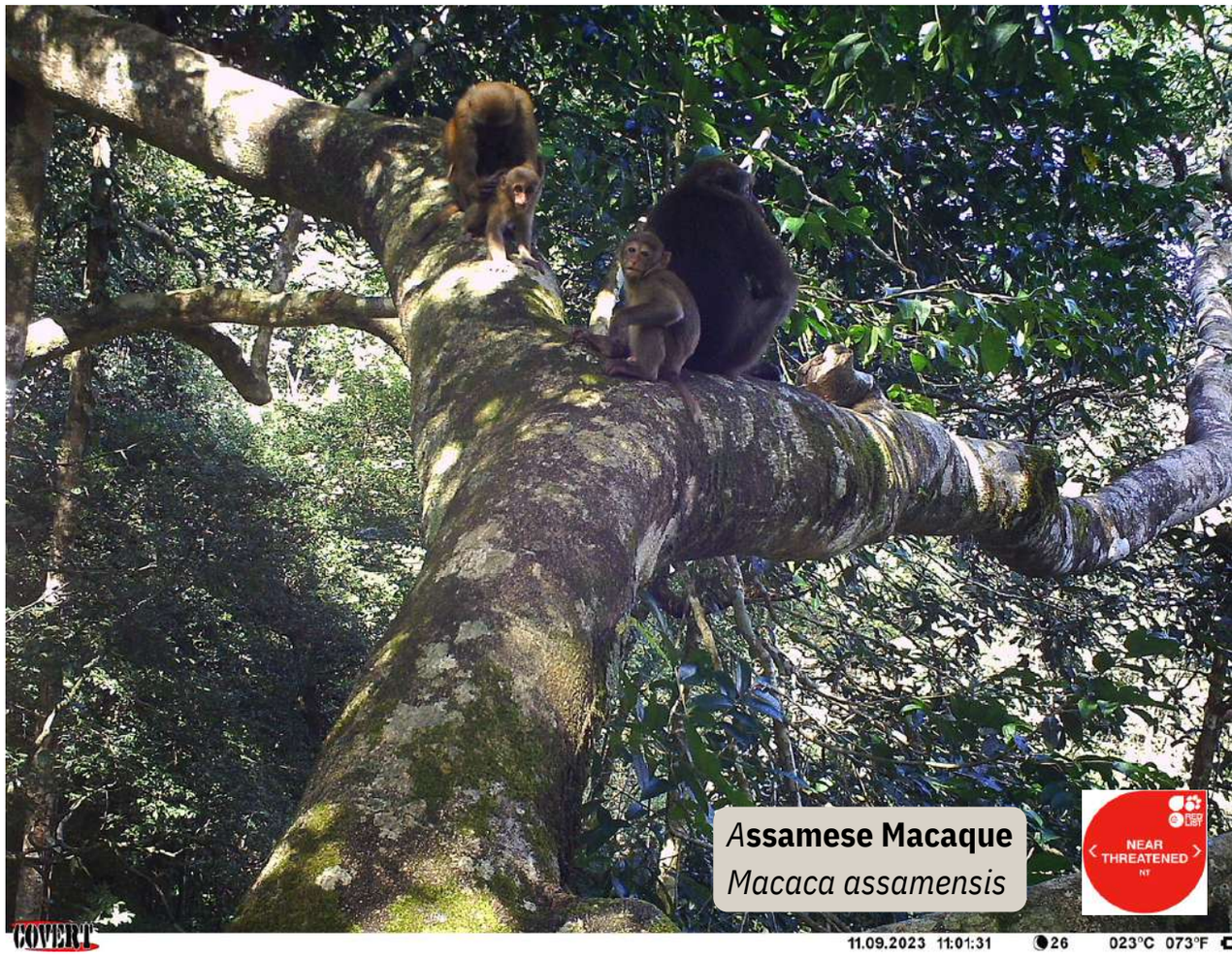
Canopy camera-traps for conservation awareness

Rationale: Our ground camera-traps overlooks several arboreal species also occurring in Nakai - Nam Theun National Park. Setting-up camera-traps in the canopy is relatively novel and offers new avenues for conservation and research of biodiversity. This pilot project will determine how best to put this method to use in our programs.

Since 2019, we have been setting-up camera-traps in the canopy to obtain incredible and unique photos of elusive arboreal species, that we use for communication purpose.

In **2023**, we monitored seven cameras from October to December and recorded **several key species**.

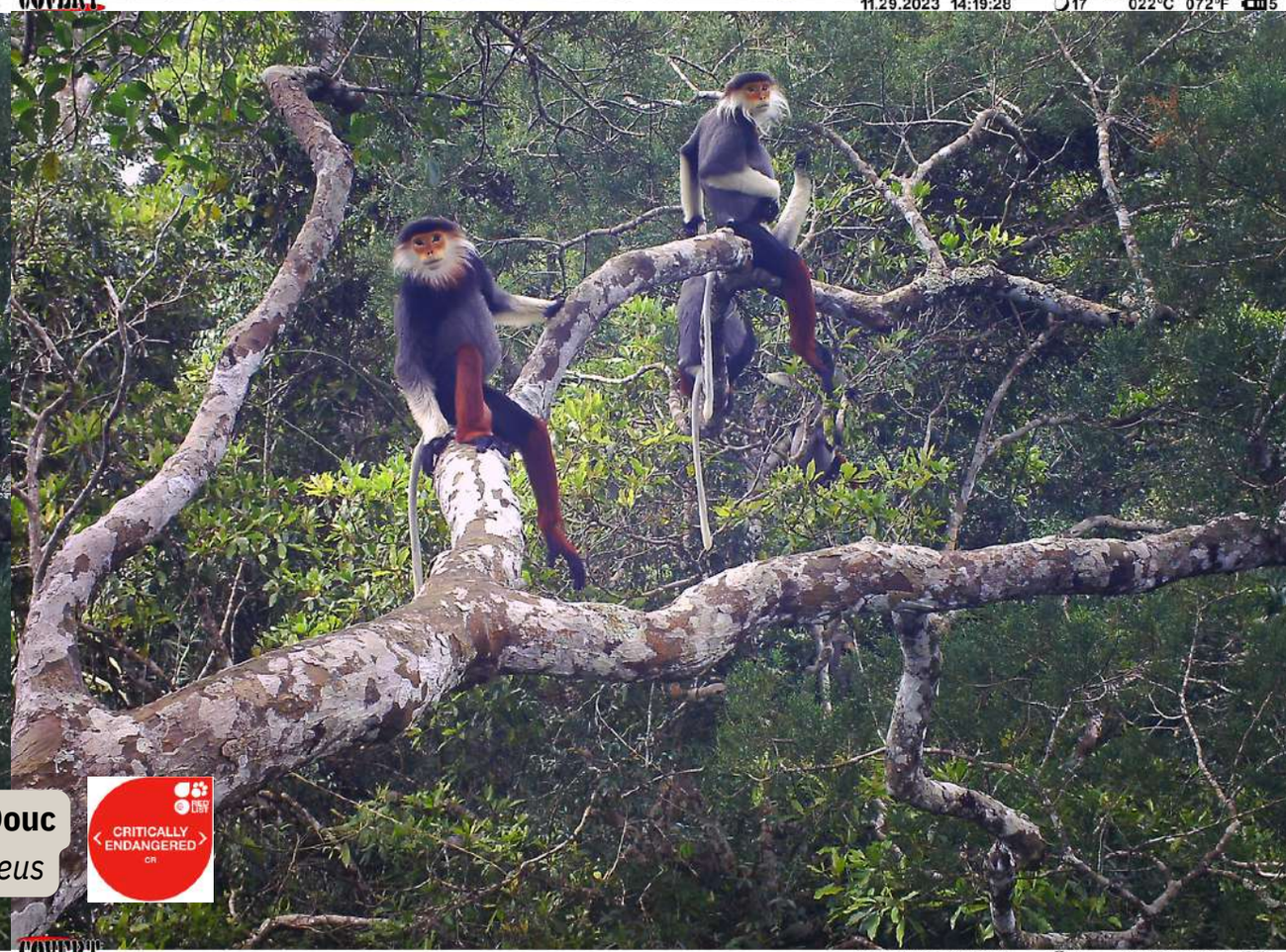





Bengal Slow Loris
Nycticebus bengalensis
ENDANGERED
EN
COVERT
12.19.2023 22:47:50 07 014°C 057°F 6


Black Giant Squirrel
Ratufa bicolor
NEAR THREATENED
NT
COVERT
11.29.2023 14:19:28 17 022°C 072°F 5


Red-shanked Douc
Pygathrix nemaeus
COVERT
10.30.2023 11:18:45 16 024°C 075°F 6


CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
CR
COVERT
10.30.2023 11:22:04 16 025°C 077°F 6

Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) population survey

Project technical partners:

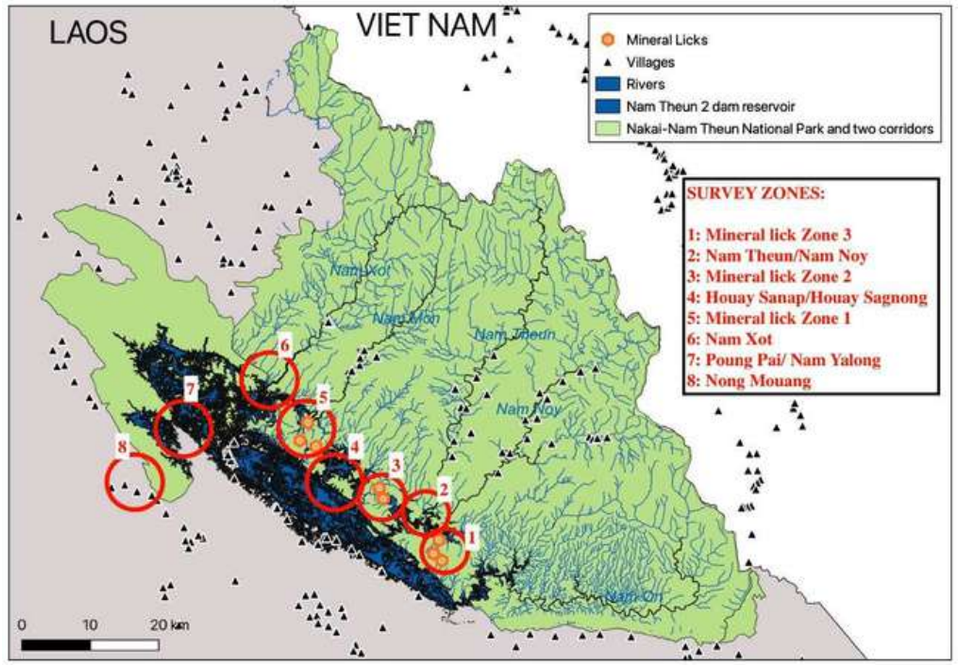
Rationale: One of the largest elephant populations of Laos is in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park and surrounding areas. In 2008, the Nam Theun 2 hydroelectric dam resulted in the flooding of a large part of the resident elephant population's habitat. Prior to the impoundment, the population was estimated at 132 elephants, likely the largest and genetically most diverse in Laos at the time. But it was suggested that the elephant population would be affected and disperse due to the habitat loss. Since the impoundment, elephants have moved closer to villages and human-elephant conflicts have increased across a wide region, spanning several provinces. The size of the elephant population has not been systematically monitored. Association Anoulak therefore initiated and is leading the study of the current status, genetic diversity and movement patterns of the elephant population, which has implications for the national and global conservation of the species.

The aims of this study are to provide an **estimation of the current elephant population size on the Nakai Plateau and surrounding areas**, as well as its **genetic diversity**, **social structure** and **dynamic**. For this elephant survey, we apply **non-invasive fecal DNA-based capture–recapture population survey methods** which consist of collecting elephant dung samples from which individual elephant DNA is later extracted in laboratory. Association Anoulak is collaborating with several technical partners to conduct this project.

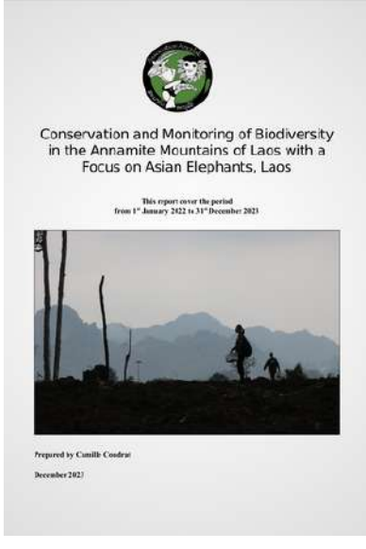
The **field data collection** was conducted from **November 2022 to May 2023** in the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park region.

Eight Survey Zones were pre-selected prior the overall project start, based on knowledge of recent presence of elephants. Each Survey Zone was **surveyed 7 times over 7 months ('Replicates')**.

Overall, a total of **652 samples of elephant dung** were collected.



Survey design for replicated survey zones at target site



Conservation and Monitoring of Biodiversity in the Annamite Mountains of Laos with a Focus on Asian Elephants, Laos

This report over the period from 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2023

Prepared by Camille Coudrat

December 2023

Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) population survey

DNA was extracted from the dung sample at a laboratory provided at the **National University of Health Science in Vientiane** under a collaboration with the French Research Institute-Lao Program. We were trained by **project technical partner Dr. Sabrina Locatelli** (from the French Research Institute-Lao Program) to perform the extraction of DNA.

After processing all required paperwork and obtaining approvals from government partners to export biological samples from Laos, all the **DNA extracts were sent to France to project technical partner Dr. Gilles Maurer** from CNRS-Montpellier (National Scientific Research Center of France)/Association Beauval Nature.

In **November 2023**, a new **collaboration** was signed **between Association Anoulak, the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and Assocation Beauval Nature** to collaborate on performing laboratory and raw data analysis in 2024. Following the **laboratory genotyping and sexing of the 652 DNA extract samples**, analysis will be performed on **population abundance, genetic diversity, movement patterns, social organization and network analysis**. The results are expected by the end of 2024.

In **2023**, we hired a Lao freelance filmmaker to **produce a video about the project** and promote this work in Laos and internationally. All sponsors and partners were acknowledged in the video with their logo.

The final video was published in three versions: English, Lao and French.

Dr. Locatelli (IRD-Lao Program) training our team on DNA extraction at the University of Health Sciences laboratory in Vientiane, Laos.

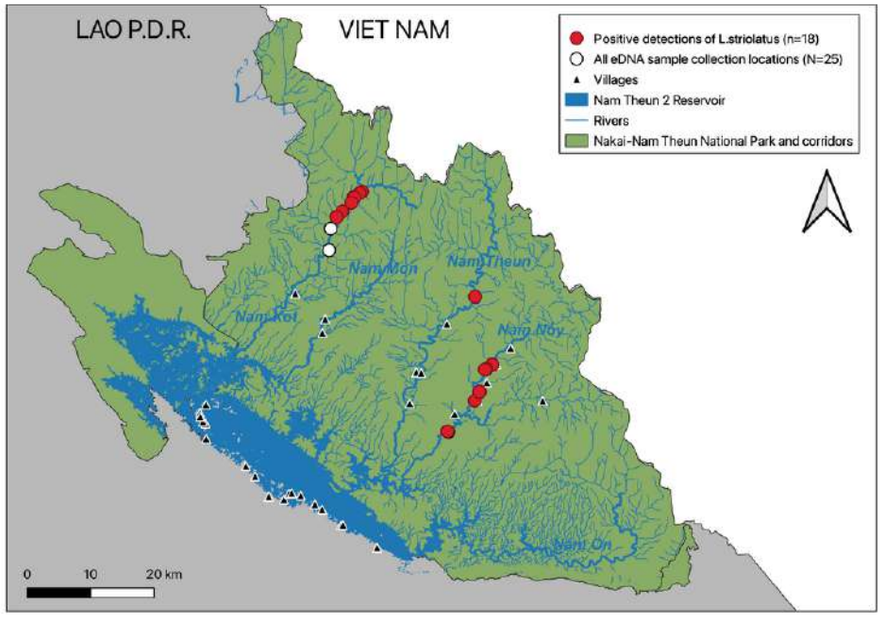
Survey and distribution of the Endangered *Luciocyprinus striolatus*

Project technical partner: FISHBIO

Rationale: *Luciocyprinus striolatus* (Local names: Pa Khouan-Zai, Pa Kang, Pa Sak) is a species of endangered cyprinid native to parts of Laos and China. The species is believed to be already extinct from China, which make Laos the only country to protect the species. The distribution of the species in Laos remains little known, as well as the threats it faces where the species has been confirmed. There are currently only two locations in the country where the species has been recorded: Nam Pak river, a tributary of the Nam Ou river in Oudomxay Province, northern Laos; and Nam Kading/ Nam Theun river, a tributary of the Mekong river, in Khammouan Province, central Laos. Confirming the confirmation status of the species in Laos is crucial to inform conservation planning for the species.

In 2022, we initiated with the technical expert FISHBIO (that received co-funding from IUCN/CEPF) a collaborative **pilot research and conservation project on the Endangered Wolf Barb *Luciocyprinus striolatus*** that aims to assess the current presence/absence and distribution of the species in the park and the main threats the population faces.

In **2022-2023**, a total of **25 water environmental DNA samples were collected** along three main rivers (Nam Xot, Nam Theun, Nam Noy) in the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park. **72% of the water samples collected detected Luciocyprinus striolatus (i.e. 18 samples out of total 25 samples)**. The positive detections of the species came from three different sites: Nam Xot, Nam Theun, Nam Noy. In addition **three L. striolatus individuals were tagged** for future monitoring in the event of re-capture. **Habitat quality assessment** was carried out at each sampling location.

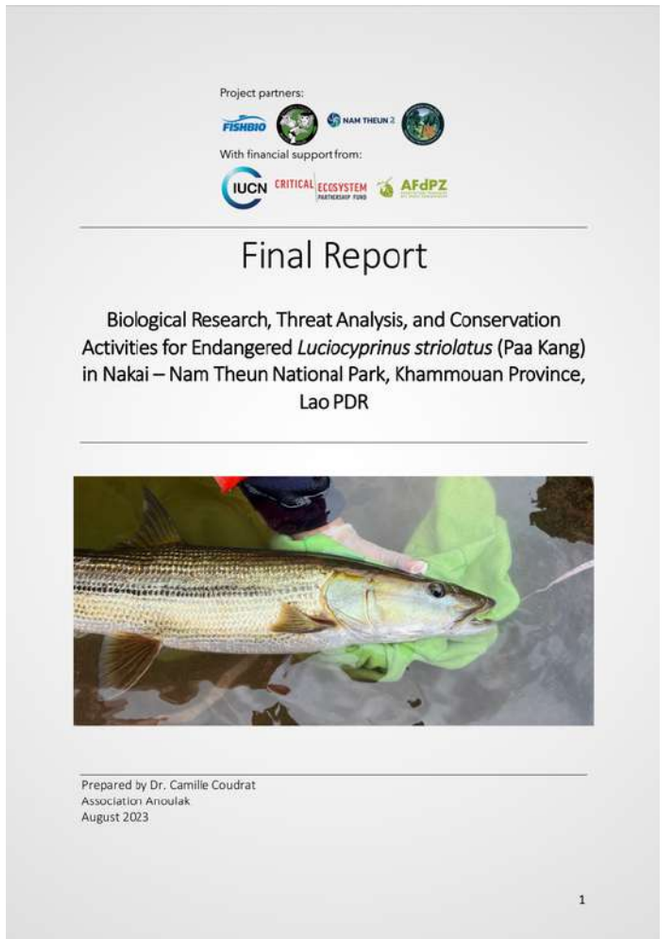


Survey and distribution of the Endangered *Luciocyprinus striolatus*

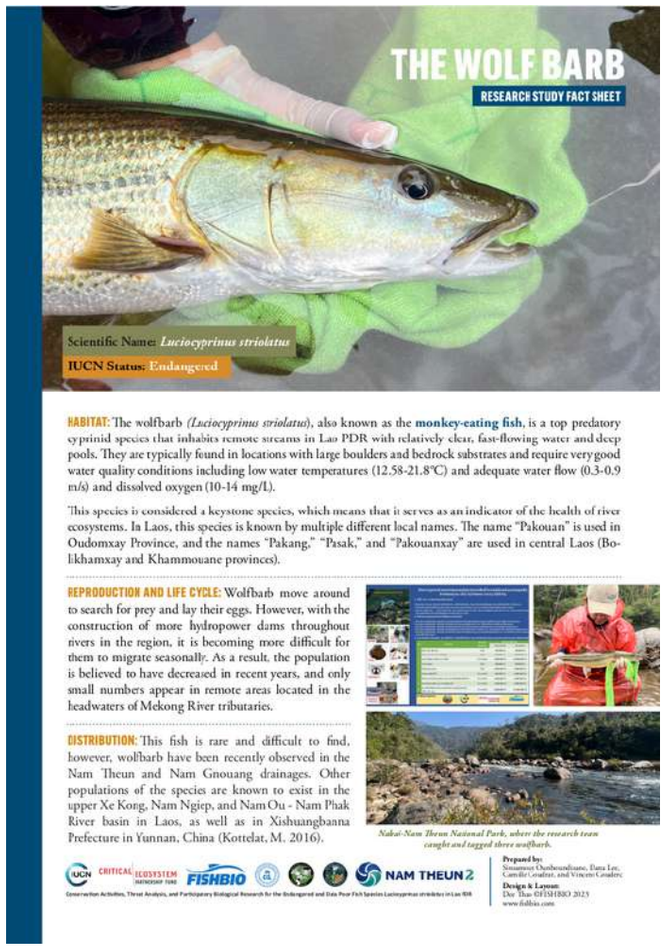
The **main threats** identified on the population of *L. striolatus* in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park are:
(1) **Fishing of the species** (as a target species or by-catch);
(2) **Depletion of prays** of *L. striolatus* resulting from over-fishing
(3) Intensive **catch-and-Release tourism attraction** without prior impact assessment

Based on the results of this pilot project (which also covered survey sites in Bolikhamxay and Ousdomxay Provinces), it was found that **Nakai-Nam Theun National Park represents the best location nationally and globally for the long-term survival of the species**.

The next step should include the set-up of community-based Fish Conservation Zones within the national park targeted at *L. striolatus*



Final partners report



Research Study Fact Sheet
produced by FISHBIO

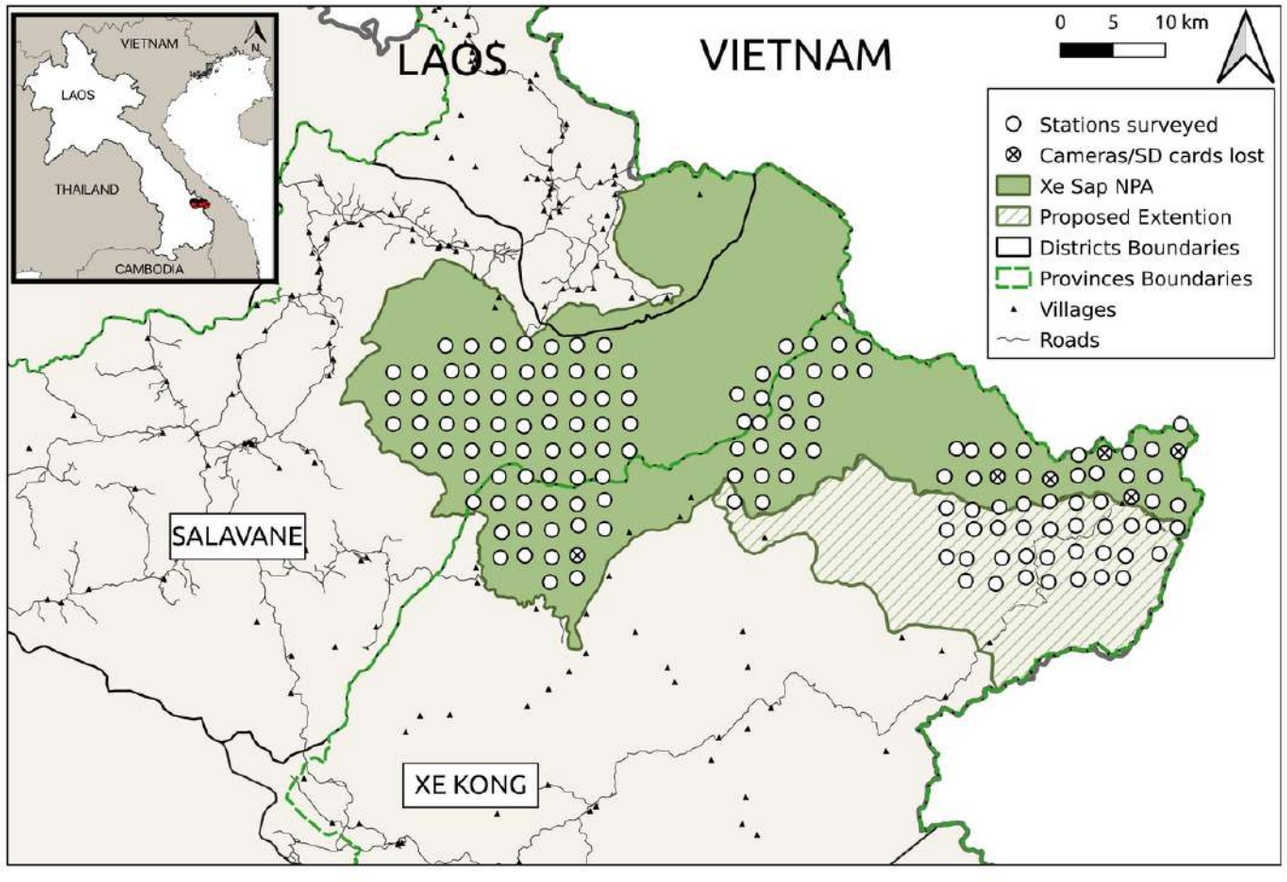
Research study promotional video
produced by FISHBIO:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25rDzXkElDY

Consultancy collaboration in other sites in the Annamite Mountains

Rationale: As part of our commitment to biodiversity conservation in the Annamite Mountains of Laos, we work in collaboration with partner institutions in other sites in the Annamite Mountains. These interventions notably include setting up systematic wildlife monitoring programs, following the same approach we have been implementing in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park. This will provide the opportunity to study the distribution and occupancy of species endemic to the Annamites and prioritize sites in conservation planning across the Annamite Mountains region.

In 2021, Association Anoulak started a consultancy collaboration with WWF-Laos to implement a systematic biodiversity monitoring program with camera-traps in one of WWF- Laos target sites in Laos as part of the Carbon and Biodiversity Phase 2 project (CarBi 2)[1]: Xe Sap National Protected Area (in Sekong and Salavan Provinces), located along the Annamite Mountain range.

The **project was completed in 2023**, with collection of camera-traps, data processing, management and analysis, reporting and data hand-over to WWF team.



Final Technical Report for surveys conducted in 2021-2023 in Xe Sap National Protected area for wildlife population monitoring

Pangolin Manis_Station 326__Camera 703050__2022-10-02

A report to WWF-Lao Program

Prepared by Lead consultant Dr. Camille N. Z. Coudrat

October 2023

1

Community sustainable livelihoods in 2023

Community resilience and biodiversity conservation in Nakai District

Rationale: Local communities on in Nakai District (1) are highly reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods, (2) their food security often is dependent on foods collected in the wild; (3) their income generation often is dependent on unsustainable natural resources harvest, (4) often practice unsustainable agriculture; (5) are lacking of entrepreneurship capacity, and technical capacity. This project aims to address some of these issues to provide alternative income to local communities

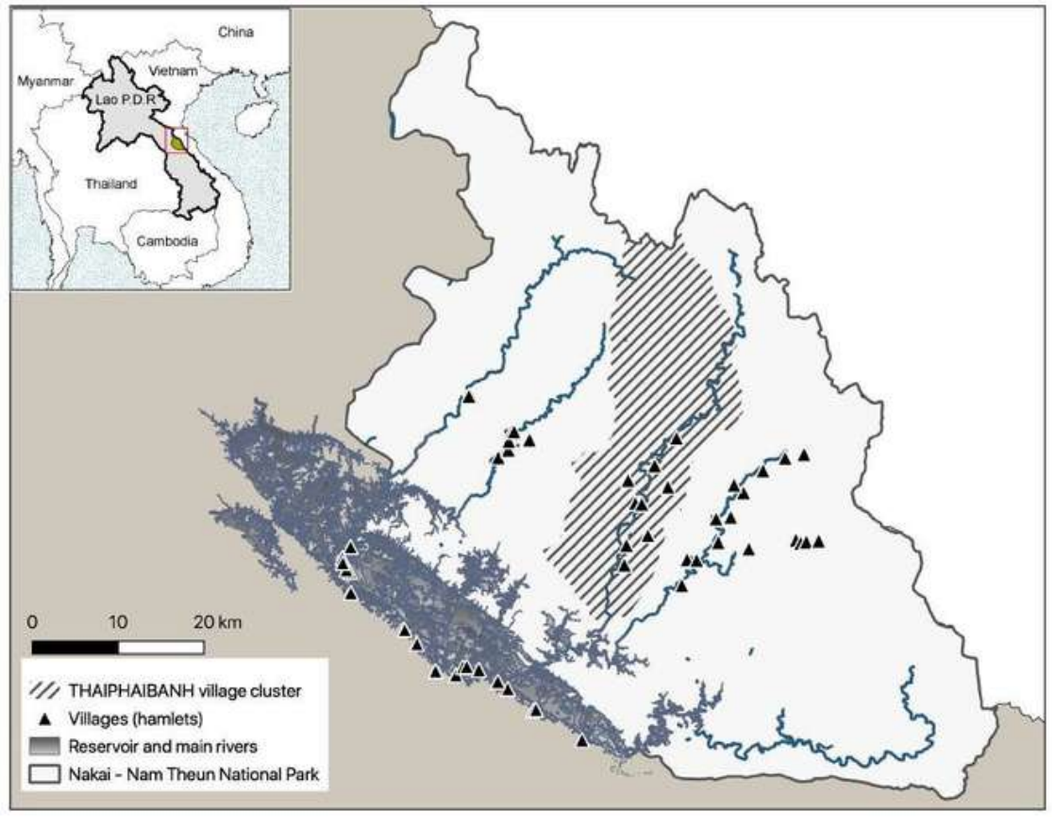
Since 2019, Association Anoulak initiated the program *Resilient Communities for Healthy Natural Ecosystems in the Annamites Mountains of Laos*

Project overall aims

- Support the local communities in implementing innovative and sustainable approaches to bring alternative incomes and to preserve local traditional craftsmanship and cultural integrity
- Reduce the illegal and unsustainable use of natural resources (including plants and wildlife) in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park to contribute to biodiversity conservation in the region

Project location

All the activities are based in Thaphaibanh village cluster (one of the three village clusters within the Nakai – Nam Theun National Park), where villagers are the most reliant on natural resources for their daily livelihoods. Villagers from this cluster have also been identified as the most vulnerable in terms of food security and income. Thaphaibanh village cluster includes includes 4 villages (further divided into nine hamlets), 520 households and >1200 people.



Location of Thaphaibanh cluster in Nakai – Nam Theun National Park where the project activities are implemented

Project approach

We focus on technical capacity building of the local community and local stakeholders to provide them the knowledge, confidence and power to become the leaders in the projects they initiate to eventually meet the goal of a self-functioning alternative income generation for local communities based on sustainably sourced and harvested forest products with added value.

PROJECT UPDATES AND SUMMARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023

In 2023, we began PHASE 2 of the program with two Objectives, to follow-up from the first phase of the program:

- **Objective 1**: Transition to a sustainable community-based Non-Timber Forest Products production business enterprises, at the individual and/or village level in Thaphaibanh cluster (4 villages)
- **Objective 2**: Natural Resources Management for sustainable management and conservation of forests, at the family level, village level and cluster level in Thaphaibanh cluster (4 villages)

- ***Progress in the support of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) business enterprise (focusing on traditional handicrafts)***:
  - Establish business plan for handicrafts value chain and support the development of a village action plan for 2023 (covering activities for Objectives 1 and 2), in consultation with communities, village facilitators and local stakeholders
  - Handcrafting traditional skills transmission within and between target villages led by experimented crafters (**March 2023**)
  - Training on upgrading weaving techniques by the National University of Laos (**May and June 2023**)
  - Study tour in Bolikhamxay Province on rattan handicraft, value chain and sustainable management (**June 2023**)
  - Study tour in Xieng Kouang province on honey and tea producer groups, as part of a case study workshop on national value chain (**June 2023**)

- ***Progress on participatory sustainable use and management of natural resources***:
  - **Natural resource assessment** including: identification of NTFPs collected for handicrafts; calendar of collection, mapping the collection sites within the community forest; baseline data collection on NTFPs abundance;
  - **NTFPs gardening** (seedling, nursery, propagation) preparation (to be implemented in 2024);
  - Training and application of **organic insecticide** for villagers;
  - **Workshops, awareness raising and training** on sustainable cassava production

- ***Progress on villagers' income generation from handicraft sales:***

In **2023**, we **expanded the handicraft network to two more villages** (Teung cluster) to provide opportunities to villagers to sell their handicrafts through our program.

In **2023**, the total handicraft units sold by all villagers from the target villages was 10,017 units with a **total income** of **177,692,600 LAK ($ 8638)** including: 150,649,000 LAK ($ 7322) to **crafters**, +2% (2,694,360 LAK) to the **Village Handicraft Fund**, and +18% (24,249,240 LAK) to **Village Facilitators** (to cover logistics and benefit). In 2023, the total number of **active crafters** (from 4 target villages in Thaphaibanh cluster) was **142 households**, including 224 persons (103 women).

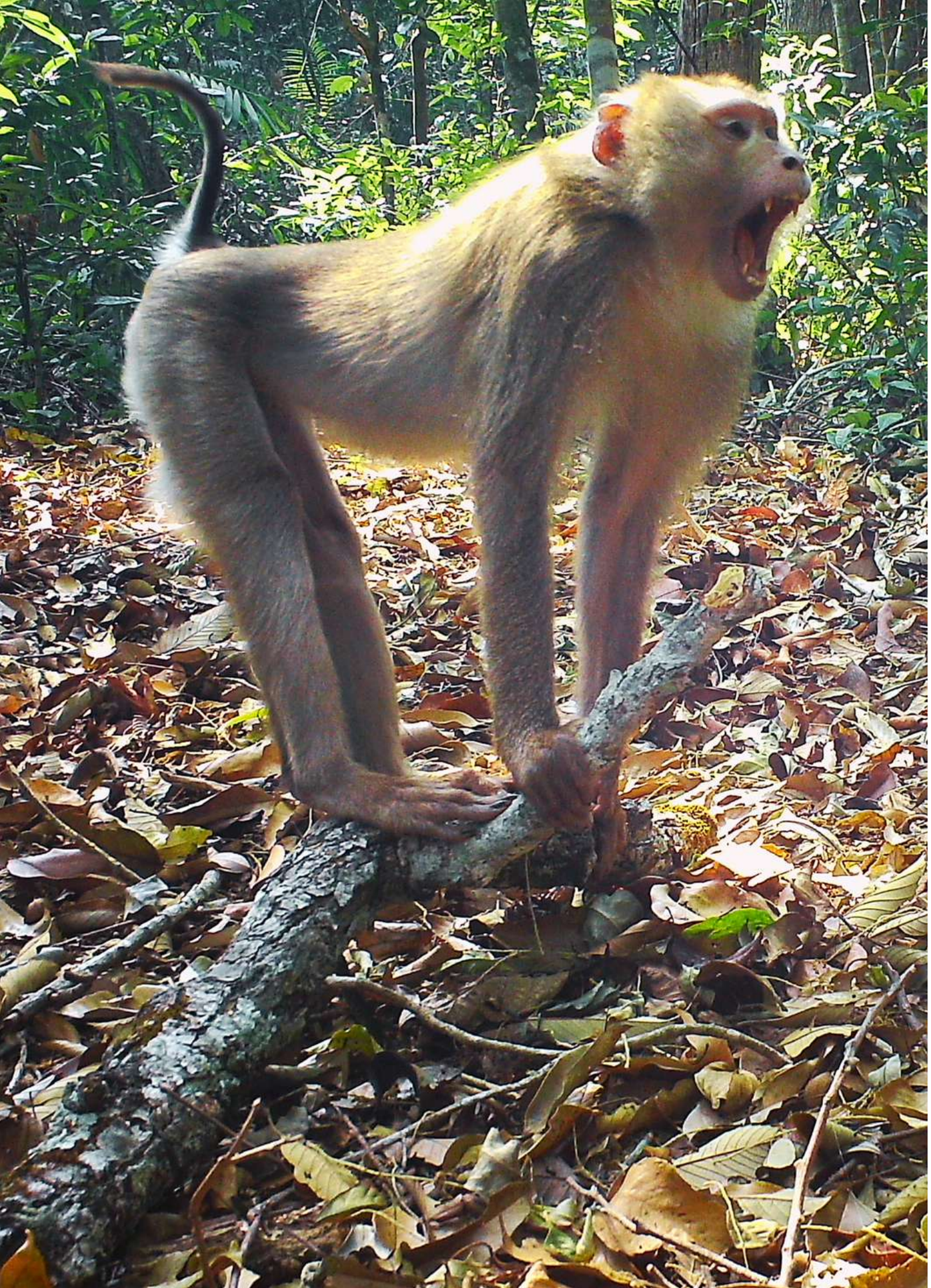
In **February 2023**, we handed-over to each village a "**Village Handicraft Fund**" based on the added value benefits made from the sales of their handicrafts (this, in addition to the direct purchase from each individual crafter of their handicraft items) over the period 2020-2022. The total amount for the 4 villages combined, came to 57,625,000.00 LAK (~3420.00 USD). These funds will be managed and used by villagers to invest in private handicraft/natural products businesses (managed under a community-based decision making agreement).

- ***Progress on handicraft marketing:***

Over the year 2023, we facilitated the participation of several events across the county including traditional festivals (including the 22nd annual National Handicraft Festival in Vientiane and the One-District-One-Product Fair in Thakhek), meetings, fairs, as well as sales at our office and shop in Nakai and online platform (Facebook Page *Thaphaibanh New Normal Crafting*). During these events, a total of 5,282 units were sold.

- ***Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) on implementation of villagers action plan and stakeholder meetings:***

Over the year 2023, our team conducted and facilitated several stakeholders consultation meetings and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning mission within the target villages to follow up the implementation of village action plans. A total of 10 MEL missions were implemented in 2023.



Conservation awareness in 2023

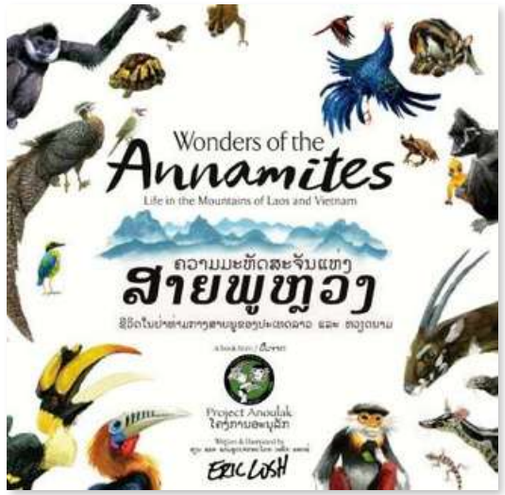
Conservation awareness published books and posters

Rationale: There is a general lack of knowledge by the national and international community of the rich biodiversity from the region and the critical threat it is facing. Knowledge is one of the key components to protect biodiversity. Association Anoulak has made one of its numerous missions to raise awareness of young and older humans, from the region and abroad, of the beautiful nature of Laos, and the importance of biodiversity conservation. Art and storytelling are great ways to do so, and notably through the publication of attractive and informative books about animals and nature.

Wonders of the Annamites

Wonders of the Annamites is written illustrated by Eric Losh and Camille Coudrat. It was first published in 2016-2017 by Association Anoulak in three editions: English-French; English-Lao; English-Vietnamese.

We re-printed the English-Lao version in 2023.



Spirit of the Saola

Spirit of the Saola is written by Melody Kemp and illustrated by Dao Van Hoang.
It was first published in 2018 by Association Anoulak in English-Lao edition.

Pangolin Life of a scaly anteater

Pangolin Life of a scaly anteater is written and illustrated by Joséphine Billeter.
It was first published in 2019 by Association Anoulak, Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden and Comité de Cooperation aves le Laos in English-Lao edition

We re-printed the English-Lao version in 2023.

Protect Your Health - Protect Wildlife

Protect Your Health - Protect Wildlife is a bilingual Lao-Eng poster/ brochure to raise awareness in Laos of the human health risks of consuming wildlife created in partnership with graphic designer Josephine Billeter. It was published by Association Anoulak in 2020.

In **2023**, these publications continued to be disseminated through different channels and at several events.

Communication and publications in 2023

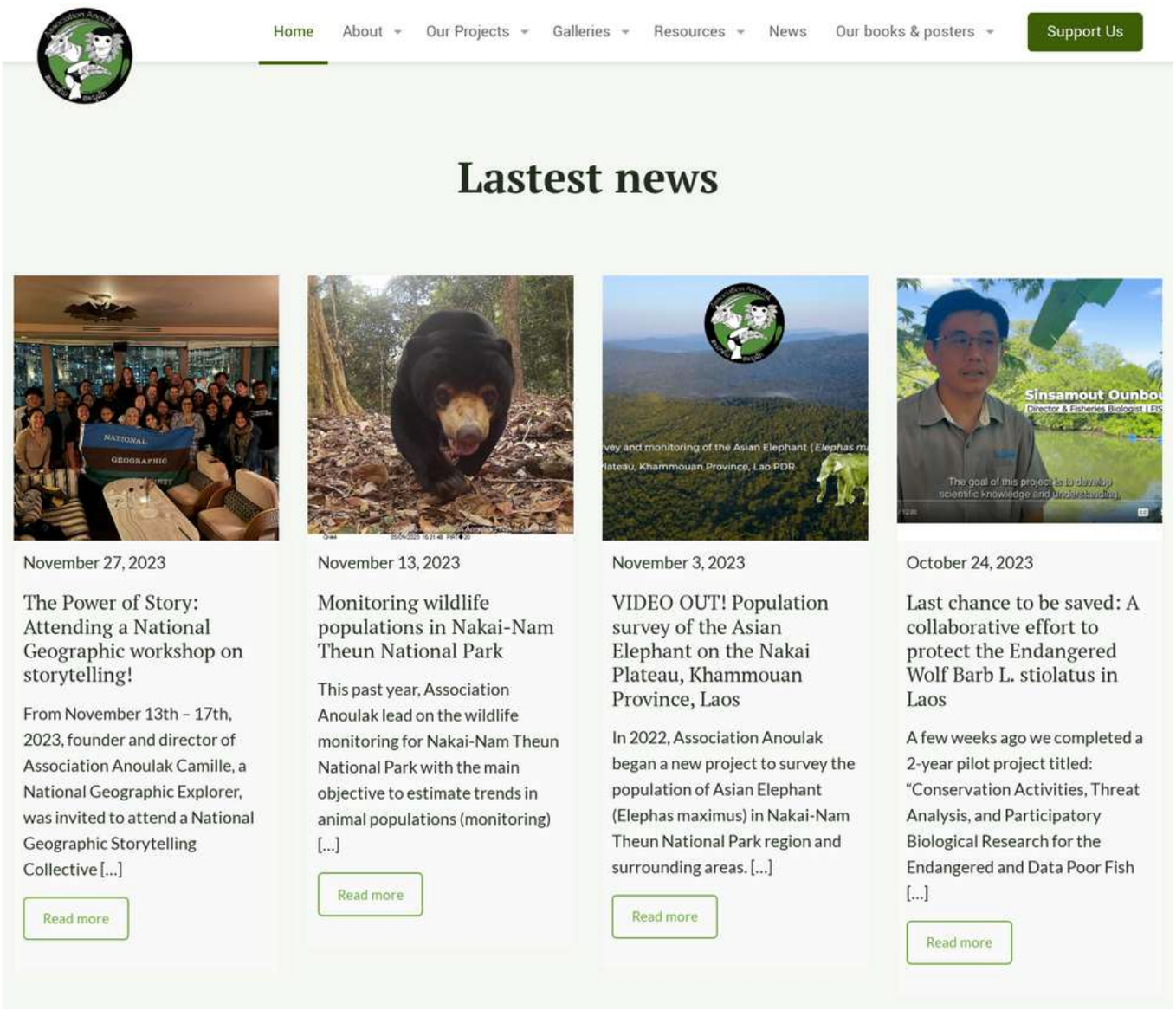
On our Website and Email Subscribers List

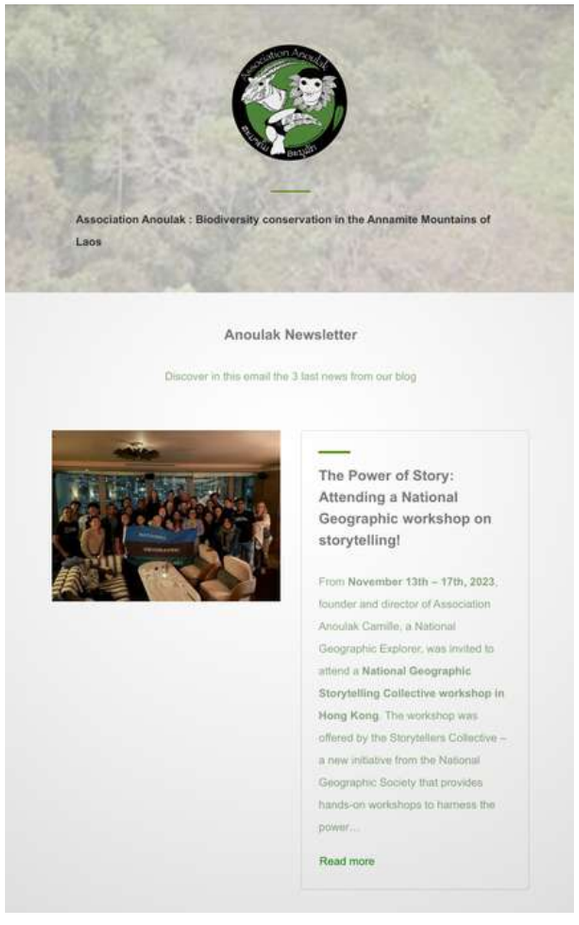
Number of Blogposts
in 2023 =

22

Number of
Anoulak Newsletters sent
in 2023 =

7





Video Productions

In **2023**, we **produced a video** presenting the first part (field work and DNA extractions in Vientiane) of our **Elephant Research Project**. We plan to edit this video with the results of the data analysis in 2024.

The video was **produced in three versions and published** on our YouTube Channel:

- **Lao**: *https://youtu.be/7vtSC4qU_54?si=OUVXxA9eMeEkPNQi*
- **English**: *https://youtu.be/8IiKPtR41Ow?si=XgcnTM9Frp-cmay7*
- **French**: *https://youtu.be/JpGTkyxPWHU?si=uXqY7QijQvcE70hC*

The video was made by freelance Lao filmmaker Ms. Chansamai Phanouvong.

Partner meetings, presentations, public talks and events in 2023

Meetings, Partnerships, Presentations and Public Talks

On the **16 January 2023** we signed an agreement with the Center of Excellence in Biodiversity of the National University of Laos. This Agreement will facilitate the implementation of research projects in collaboration with research teams from the National University of Laos.

On the **27 January 2023**, we convened our national partners from the central, provincial, district and local level to present Association Anoulak's Annual Report 2022.

Meetings, Partnerships, Presentations and Public Talks

From **4 to 5 March 2023** Ms. Keomany LEUANGTHI from Association Anoulak participated in the World Wildlife Day Regional Youth Symposium in Singapore on the theme Partnerships for Wildlife Conservation in Southeast Asia that brought together over 170 youths aged between 18-35 years old from around the region. Ms. Keomany was sponsored by Mandai Nature to attend the symposium.

On the **3 April 2023**, founder and director of Association Anoulak Dr. Camille N.Z. Coudrat was invited to give a guest lecture to students at the National University of Singapore, in a module titled Applied Biogeography. This module is taught by wetland restoration ecologist Dr. Gretchen Coffman. Dr. Coffman is a senior Lecturer, National University of Singapore, Geography Department who teaches wetland restoration ecology, biogeography, applied ecology and research methods in Physical Geography.

Meetings, Partnerships, Presentations and Public Talks

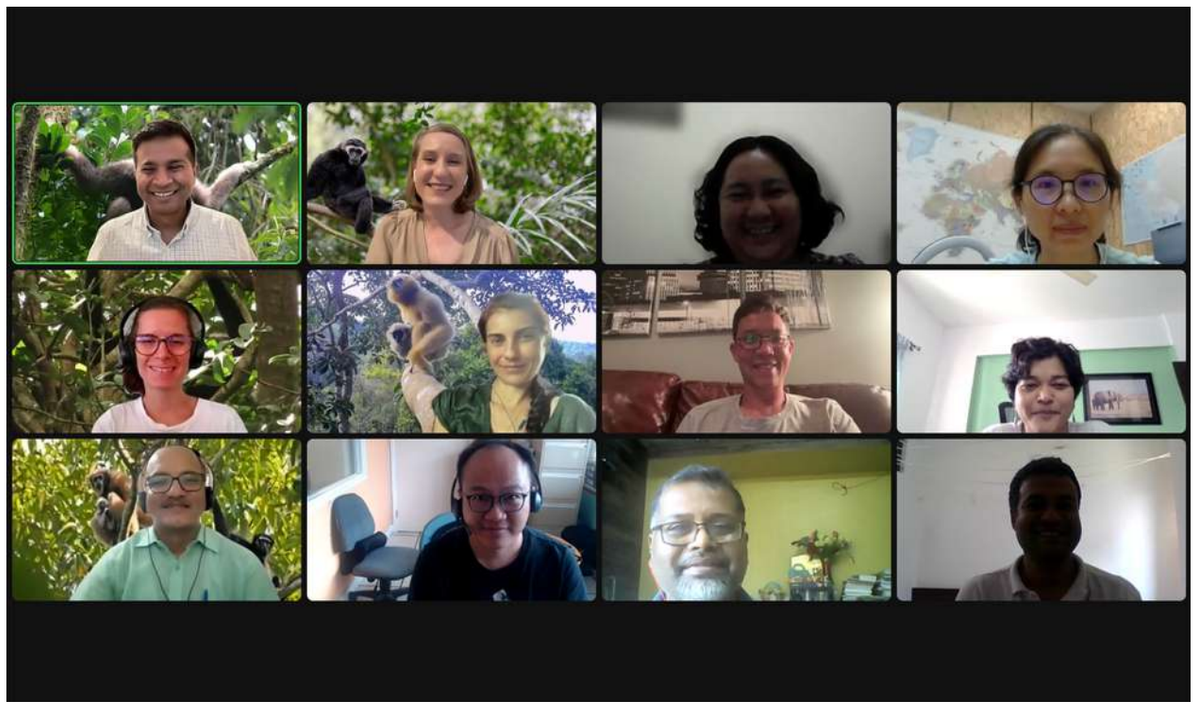
On **21 July 2023**, Association Anoulak's Lao Government partners from the central, provincial, district and local level gathered for a mid-year activities progress report meeting in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park Office.

From **18 to 25 July 2023**, Ms. Keomany (Wildlife Research Fieldwork officer at Association Anoulak) was selected to participate the annual "Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Field Skills Training Course" implemented by The Asian Turtle Program (ATP) of Indo-Myanmar Conservation (IMC). The course is conducted in collaboration with the Laos Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW) and the National University of Laos (NUOL) under a Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)/IUCN grant for IMC. In the week-long course, the 15 participants (Lao students, researchers, conservationists selected through a competitive application process) were provided with practical skills and experience relating to research and conservation of turtles through a combination of classroom instructions and field exercises.

Meetings, Partnerships, Presentations and Public Talks

In **July 2023**, Association Anoulak's founder and director, Ms. Camille Coudrat sat down with two ladies representing the association "World of Women" for intimate interview. World of Women is a digital media portraying women with atypical careers. Its aim is to bring new role models to the new generation of women, by sharing the stories of women all around the world who have gone out the beaten track.

In interview is available online: https://youtu.be/oHrf4LqXWh8?si=9bxWcI6sFos81gDV



In **2023**, Dr. Camille Coudrat completed the Leadership Learning Program for the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group Section on Small Apes. The program began in 2022, bringing together several conservationists from Southeast Asia working on Gibbons. The training was provided by Design Pathways.

IUCN
PRIMATES
SECTION ON
SMALL APES

Meetings, Partnerships, Presentations and Public Talks

From **19 to 25 August 2023**, we attended the International Primatological Society 2023 in Kuching, Borneo Malaysia. We presented two of our projects at the a symposium dedicated to Gibbons: *Addressing Knowledge Gaps for Saving the Small Apes:Lessons from Research, Conservation, and Outreach:*

- Camille Coudrat (Association Anoulak director) presented the preliminary results of our project on the distribution of White-cheeked Gibbons in Central Laos
- Technical partners Dr. Cornelia Oedekoven from St. Andrews University presented our current collaborative project consisting of developing new technology to survey gibbon populations

IPS-MPS'23
KUCHING • MALAYSIA
Joint Meeting of the International Primatological Society and the Malaysian Primatological Society

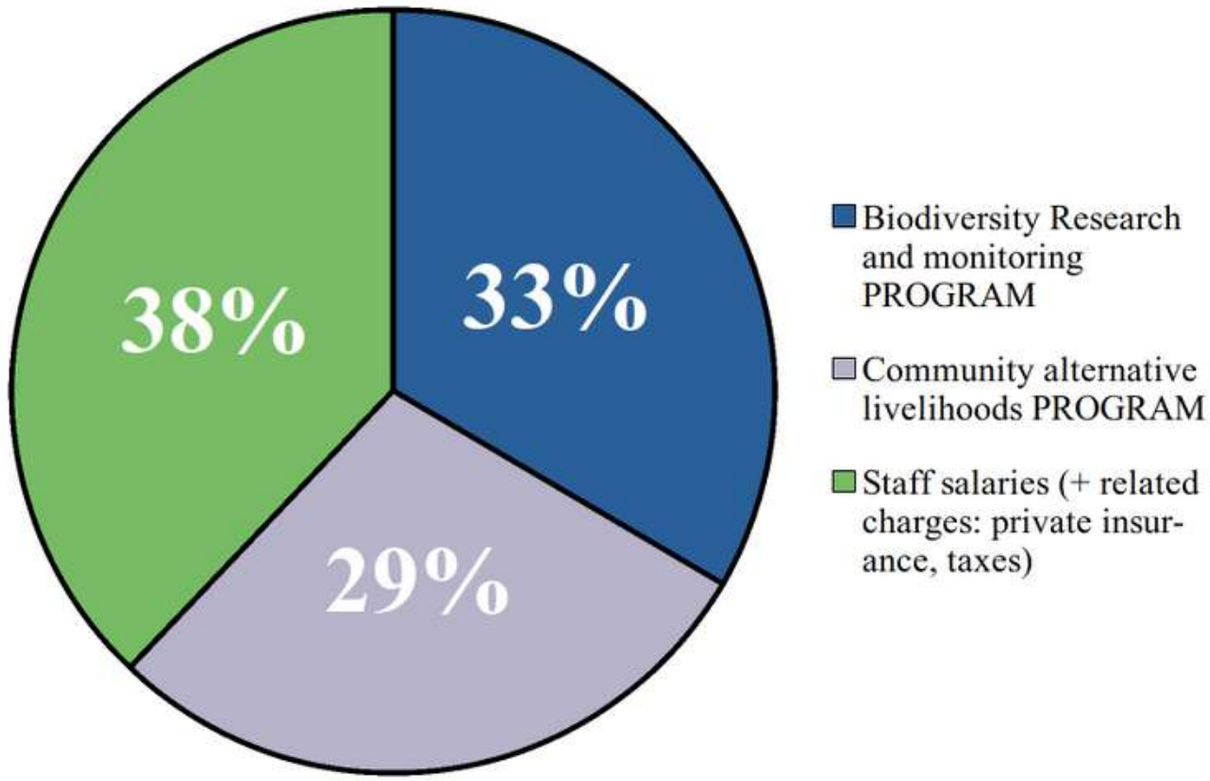
From **November 13 to 17 2023**, founder and director of Association Anoulak Camille, a National Geographic Explorer, was invited to attend a National Geographic Storytelling Collective workshop in Hong Kong. The workshop was offered by the Storytellers Collective – a new initiative from the National Geographic Society that provides hands-on workshops to harness the power of storytelling.

Financial report for 2023

Expenses in 2023

Category	Total (USD)
Biodiversity Research and Monitoring PROGRAM	$88,740
Community Alternative Livelihoods PROGRAM	$76,247
Staff Salaries (+ related charges: private insurance, taxes)	$100,631
Total**	***$265,618***

***updated as of 31st December 2023: this figure is not yet finalized with some additional overhead costs of the Association*



Workplan for 2024

Work Plan 2024 (tentative)

Associaton Anoulak	**2024**											
Project/Program	**JAN**	**FEB**	**MAR**	**APR**	**MAY**	**JUN**	**JUL**	**AUG**	**SEP**	**OCT**	**NOV**	**DEC**
Biodiversity research and monitoring in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park												
Gibbon research: gibbon survey method development (test of hardware/software prototype in the field in Xe Sap NPA in collaboration with WWF-Laos)												
Elephant survey research (data analysis and reporting)												
Luciocyprinus striolatus – Follow-up : Fish Conservation Zones and set-up training to NNT NP staff (implemented by project partner FISHBIO)												
Data analysis and publication on all projects												
Community Livelihood Program												
Program activities implementation: - *Objective 1*: Development and implementation of bottom-up Non-Timber Forest Products Production Groups - *Objective 2*: Natural Resources Management Plan for sustainable sourcing and use (will include village-level resource management plans, botanical research, social science research)												
Conservation Awareness												
Youth for the Planet: Training course in collaboration with ECONOX												

Acknowledgements

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO DONORS WHO SUPPORTED OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2022

Zoo Mulhouse Alsace

Mulhouse Alsace Agglomération
www.mulhouse-alsace.fr

Muséum
Citadelle Besançon
Patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO

AFdPZ
Association Française des Parcs Zoologiques

Fondation Segré

Zoo des Sables
L'ecozoo

Apenheul Primate Conservation Trust
Apenheul Natuur-behoud Fonds

CERZA Conservation

ZSH
Zoological Society of Hertfordshire

Stichting Wildlife

Zoo de la Barben

the ellenfund
The Ellen DeGeneres Wildlife Fund

DODO
Zoo Wrocław

Mandai Nature

Denver Zoo

arcus Foundation

ICFC International Conservation Fund of Canada
where nature needs us most

Wilhelma
Zoologisch-Botanischer Garten
Stuttgart

The Conservation, Food & Health Foundation

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

THANK YOU TO OUR PROJECT PARTNERS IN 2023

Nakai Nam Theun National Park

Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research
IN THE FORSCHUNGSVERBUND BERLIN E.V.

CZU
CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

University of St Andrews

RAINFOREST CONNECTION

FISHBIO

NAM THEUN 2

IRD
Institut de Recherche pour le Développement
FRANCE

RZSS
THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CHARITY

CENTRE D'ECOLOGIE FONCTIONNELLE & EVOLUTIVE

WWF
LAOS

New Year’s Greetings


Happy New Year 2024

Contact:

camillecoudrat@conservationlaos.com

SUPPORT US

Association Anoulak

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info@conservationlaos.com
www.conservationlaos.com