



# Annual Report 2024





# Annual Report

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# 2024

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# Table of Content

• <b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
• <b>About us</b>	<b>5</b>
• <b>Biodiversity Research and Monitoring in 2024</b>	<b>9</b>
• White-cheeked Gibbons ( <i>Nomascus siki</i> / <i>N. leucogenys</i> ) distribution	10
• Gibbon survey methods development	12
• Wildlife populations monitoring with camera-traps	14
• Asian Elephant ( <i>Elephas maximus</i> ) population survey	16
• Conservation of the Endangered <i>Luciocyprinus striolatus</i>	17
• Biodiversity Research & Monitoring Strategy 2024-2028 for Nakai-Nam Theun National Park	18
• <b>Community sustainable livelihoods in 2024</b>	<b>19</b>
• <b>Conservation awareness in 2024</b>	<b>28</b>
• <b>Capacity Building in 2024</b>	<b>34</b>
• <b>Communication and publications in 2024</b>	<b>43</b>
• <b>Meetings, conferences and events in 2024</b>	<b>46</b>
• <b>Financial report for 2024</b>	<b>54</b>
• <b>Workplan 2025</b>	<b>56</b>
• <b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>58</b>
• <b>New Year's greetings</b>	<b>61</b>

# Foreword

*Dear friends, colleagues, partners,*

*As we **bid farewell to 2024**, let's celebrate a year of **remarkable achievements and transformative milestones**. Together, we've advanced our efforts in Biodiversity Research and Monitoring, empowered communities through Sustainable Livelihoods, and strengthened Capacity Building programs.*

*What we can be the most proud of is **support we have provided to communities, youth, our team members** which has positively impacted their livelihoods, growth, skills—bringing us, **collectively**, closer to a brighter and more sustainable future.*

*As we confront the **complex challenges** of biodiversity conservation, **in 2025 our association is embracing a transformative approach: shifting from direct implementation to empowering civil society as the champions of environmental protection**. While anti-poaching patrols and research have yielded critical successes, long-term conservation requires building a foundation of local stewardship. By **investing in education, capacity-building, and sustainable livelihoods**, we aim to equip the civil society with the skills, knowledge, and resources to lead conservation efforts themselves. This shift ensures that the **next generation of conservation practitioners emerges from within**, fostering a deep sense of ownership, resilience, and lasting commitment to safeguarding their natural heritage. Therefore, from 2025, we will **focus our efforts on Capacity Building in Laos**. We invite our donors and partners to join us in this bold vision for sustainable impact.*



*Camille,  
Laos, January 2025*





# 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 2024, Association Anoulak employs **9 persons (8 women): 1 foreigner and 8 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. Kouanta - Community Program officer
- Ms. Lae - Community Program officer
- Ms. Meesouk Phetsomphou - Accountant

In addition in 2024, Association Anoulak supports financially as part of our programs:

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

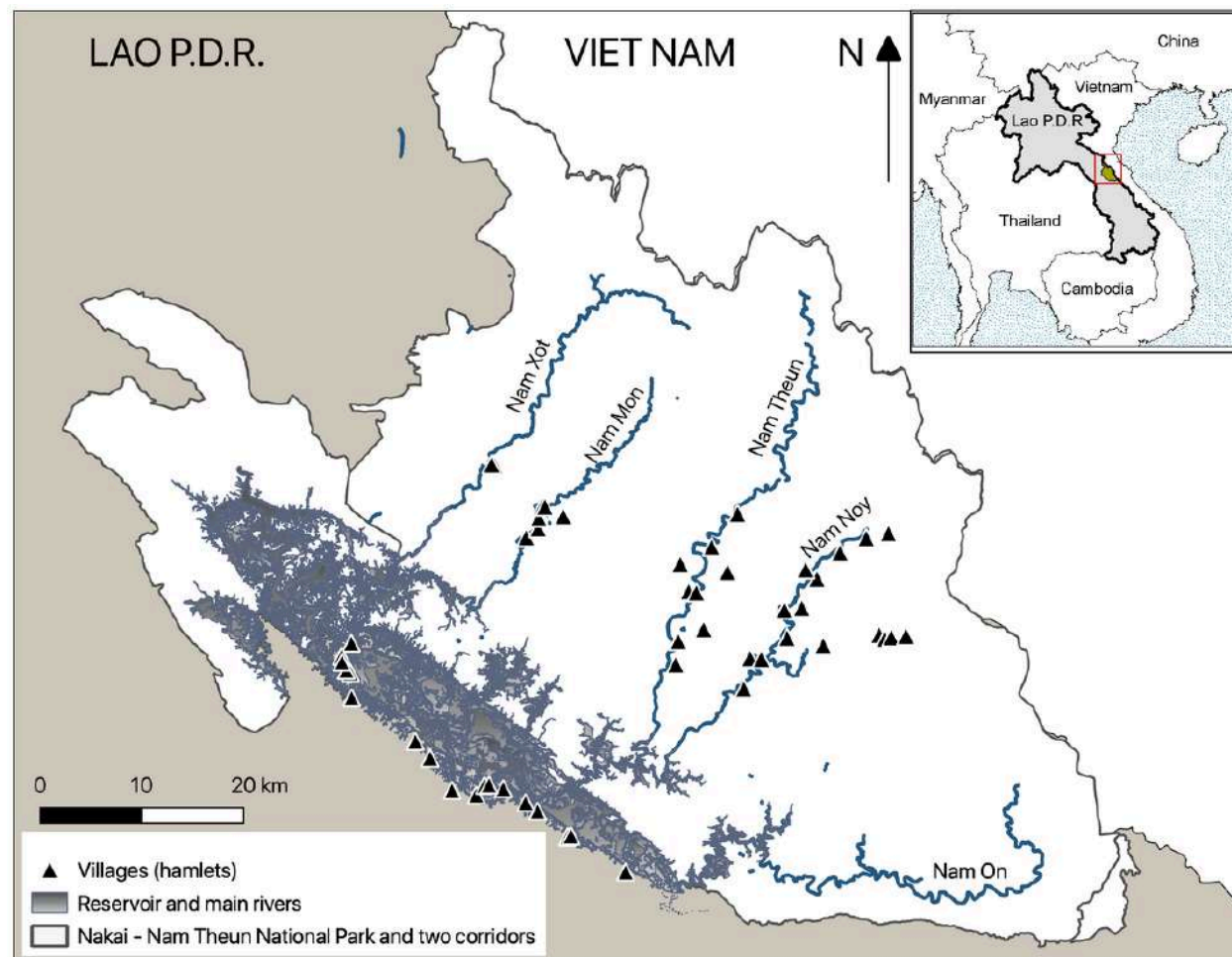


# Zone of intervention: The Annamite Mountains of Laos



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 **biodiversity 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**, as 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 2014:

## \* **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**

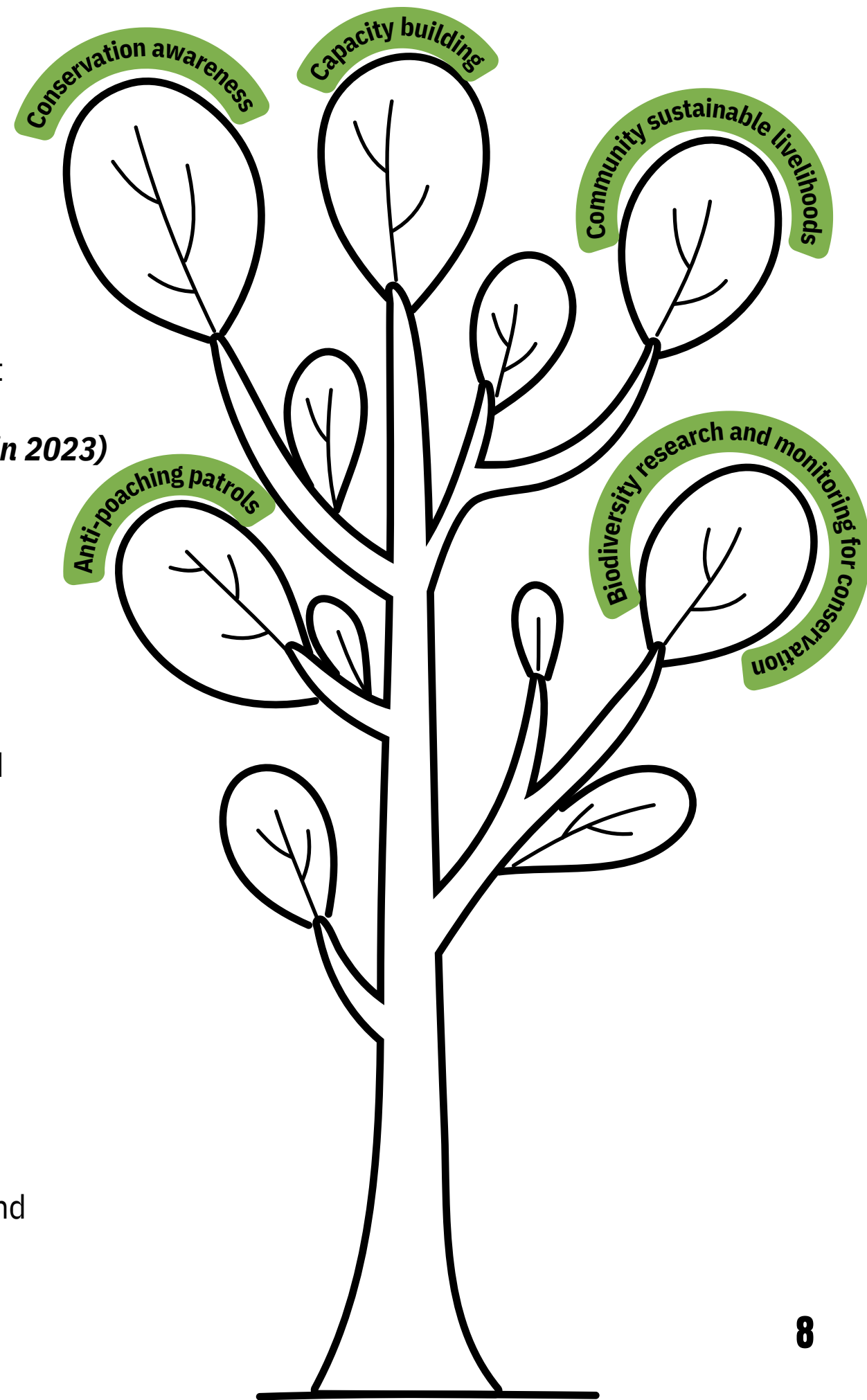
**Objective:** to raise awareness of the local and international community about the biodiversity of the Annamite mountains and the importance of protecting it.

## \* **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 2024

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

Project technical partner:



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.

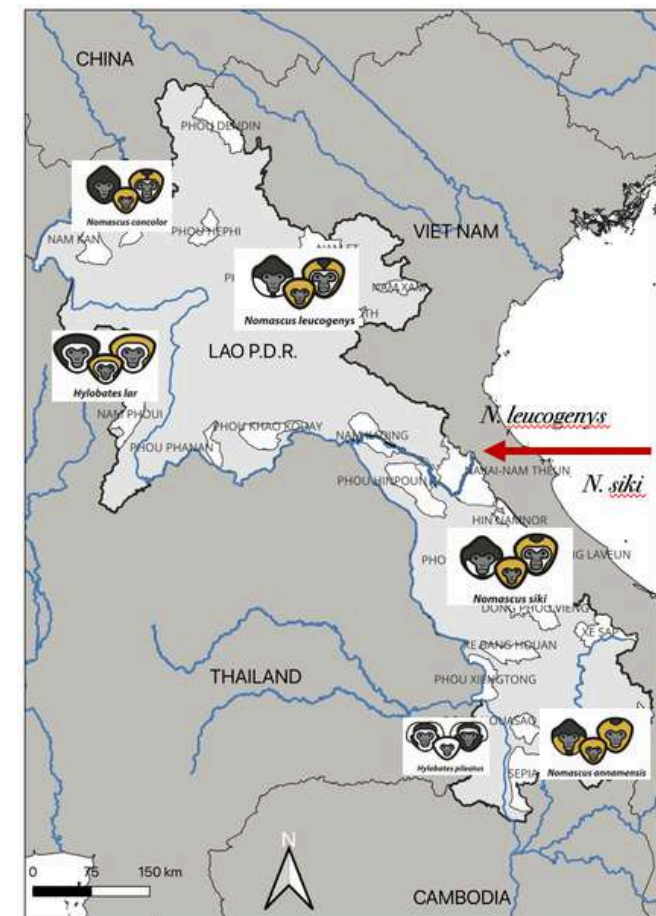
Our objective is to **identify the species occurring in the national park region**, distinguishing the Northern White-cheeked Gibbon (*Nomascus leucogenys*) and Southern White-cheeked Gibbon (*N. siki*), their **occurrence and distribution across the national park region and in central Laos**

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 **30 acoustic samples of genetically-screened gibbon individuals** of both species from **zoological facilities in Europe** to strengthen the statistical analysis.

In **2024**, we **performed further analysis on our dataset for a publication**



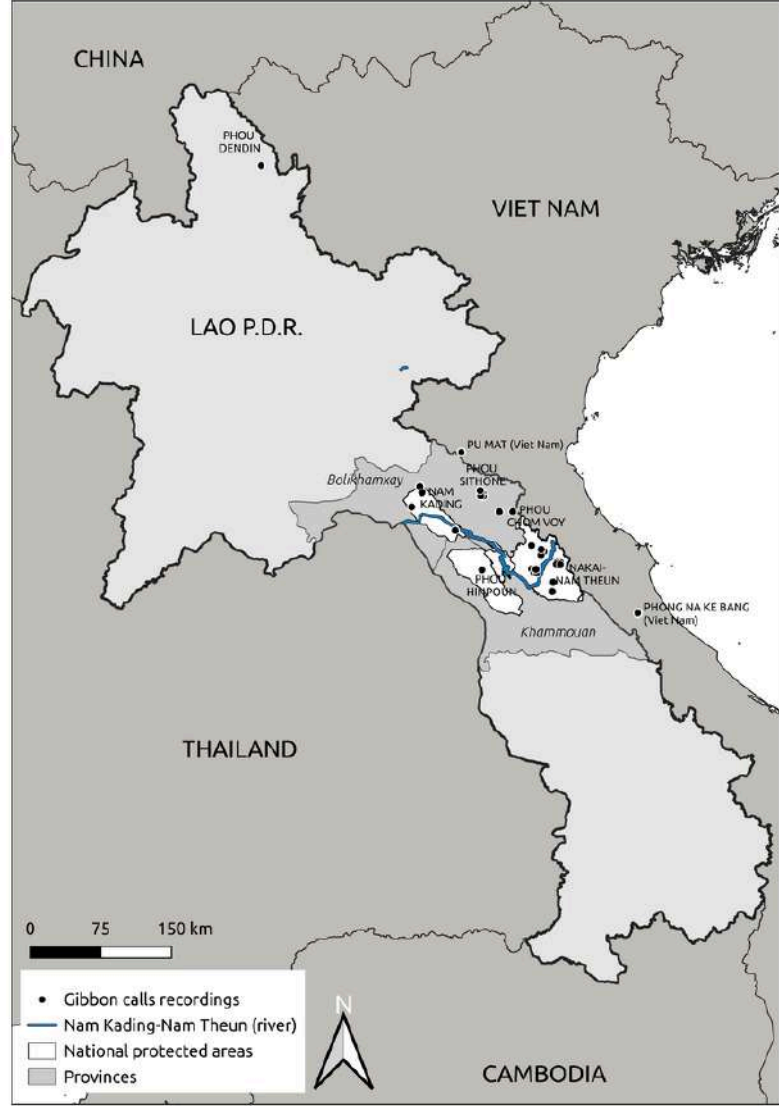
# White-cheeked Gibbons (*Nomascus siki*/*N. leucogenys*) distribution

In 2024, we submitted a manuscript for publication:

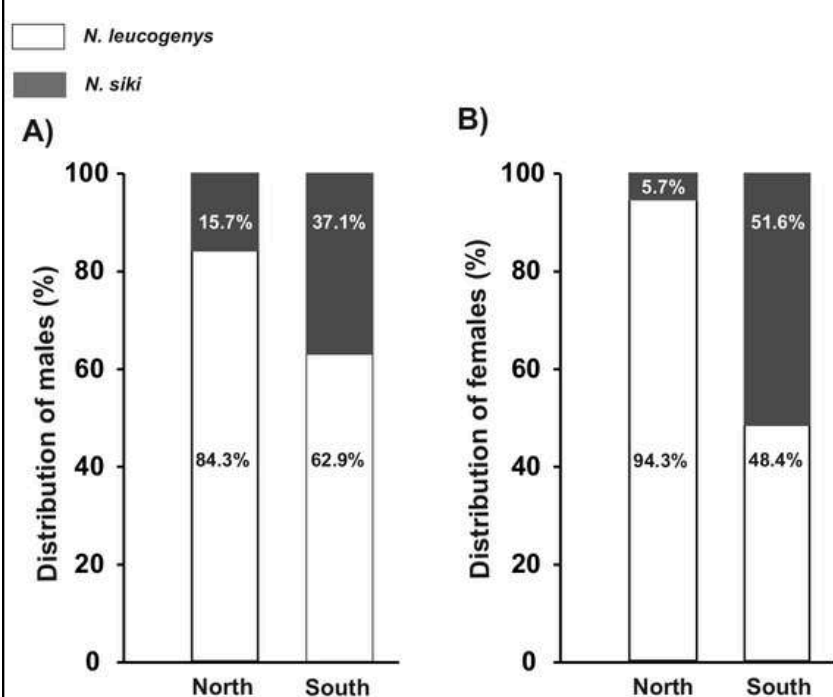
## ***New Insights in the Distribution of White-Cheeked Gibbons Nomascus siki and N. leucogenys in Central Lao PDR***

*Coudrat, C.N.Z., Hradec, M., Vostrá-Vydrová, H.*

- Our dataset contains **737 male calls and 229 female calls**
- We extracted significantly different **acoustic parameters for males (n=10) and females (n=12)** from songs recorded in captivity, used as training data for a **Random Forest species classification analysis** of vocal recordings of unknown species from the wild
- Our classification had an **accuracy of 96.67% for males and 89.47% for females**
- Vocalizations were **assigned to both species on both sides of the Nam Theun-Nam Kading**
- Our study brings new insights into the distribution range limit of the two Critically Endangered species, including implications for species-specific and site-based conservation planning and reintroduction programs



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



Results of the Random Forest analysis showing the distribution of the male calls (a) and female calls (b) of *N. siki* and *N. leucogenys* to the north and south of the Nam Theun-Nam Kading river in central Laos and Vietnam.

# Gibbon survey methods development

Project technical  
partners:



University of  
St Andrews



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** 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 **January-February 2024**, the first prototypes of the recorders were tested in the field in Xe Sap National Protected Area, in **collaboration with WWF-Laos**. This field mission was joined by Dr. Johnson (acoustic engineer), Dr. Oedekoven from **University of St. Andrews**, Ms. Keo from **Association Anoulak**, and Mr. Bo and Mr. Peter from **WWF-Laos**.

The recorders are very promising acoustic survey tools, that have capabilities beyond those of existing terrestrial acoustic survey tools. However, some data analysis issues need to be resolved before they are an effective and convenient tool for estimating density and abundance.

In 2025, funding will be raised by St Andrew University to pursue the software development. Follow-up field testing will then be implemented in Laos.



# Gibbon survey methods development

Project technical partners:



University of St Andrews



Team in the field



# Wildlife populations monitoring with systematic camera-trap surveys

Project technical partner:



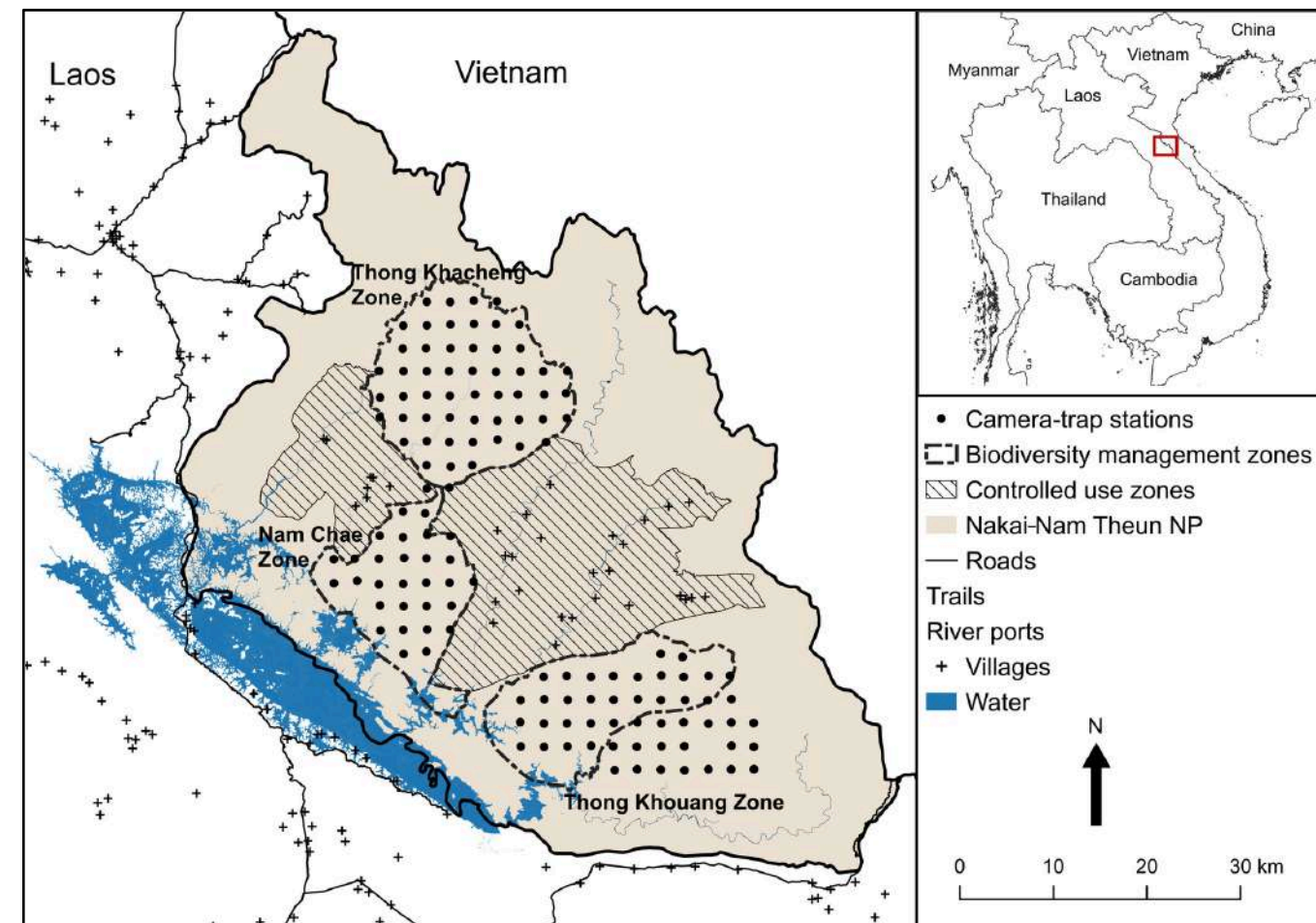
Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research  
IN THE FORSCHUNGSVERBUND BERLIN E.V.

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 **2024**, we published a study based on the 2023 dataset:

***Multi-species occupancy modeling of ground-dwelling mammals in central Laos: a case study for monitoring in tropical forests.*** Alexiou, I., Coudrat, C.N.Z., Niedballa, J., Wilting, A., Tilker, A. 2024. Wildlife Biology

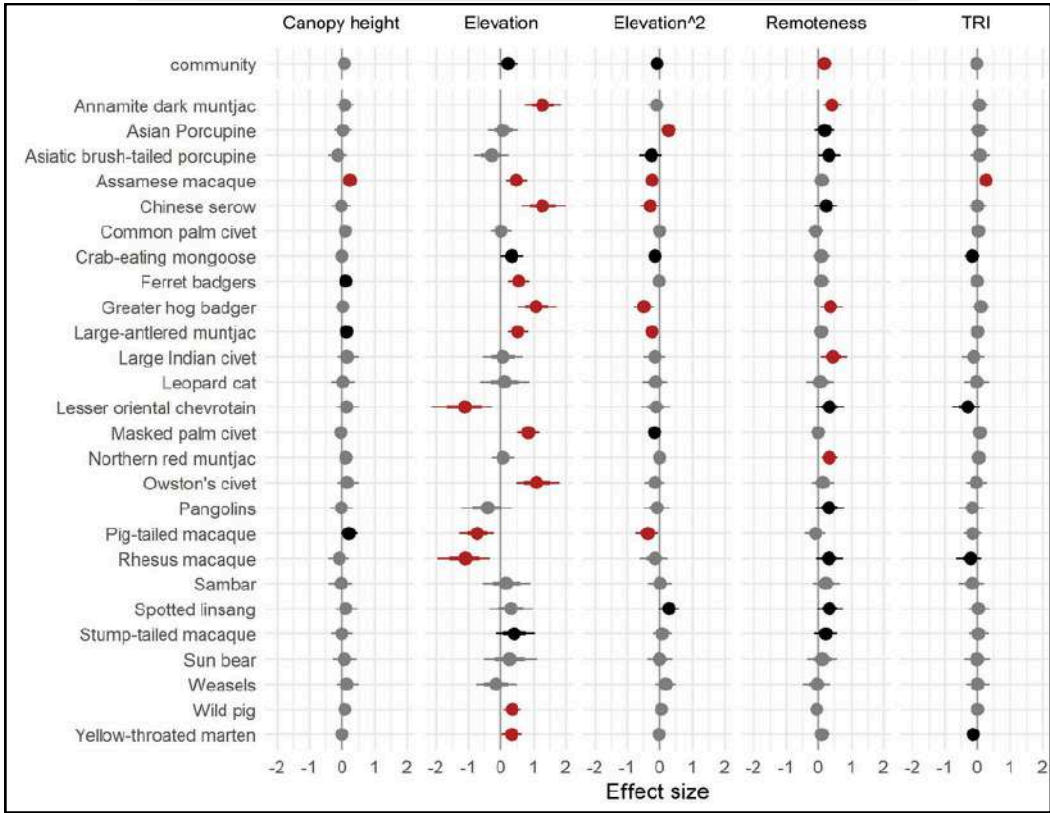
## MAIN FINDINGS

- Total of **40 terrestrial mammals** were detected, including **5 Annamite endemics** and **18 threatened species**
- **28 species** with sufficient detections to be included in the multi-species occupancy analysis
- Overall species richness increased with remoteness and elevation
- mean (SD) **predicted species richness**:
  - Thong Kacheng Zone: 14.6 (± 1.55)
  - Thong Kouang Zone: 13.2 (± 1.64)
  - Nam Chae Zone: 11.8 (± 1.15)

## CONCLUSIONS

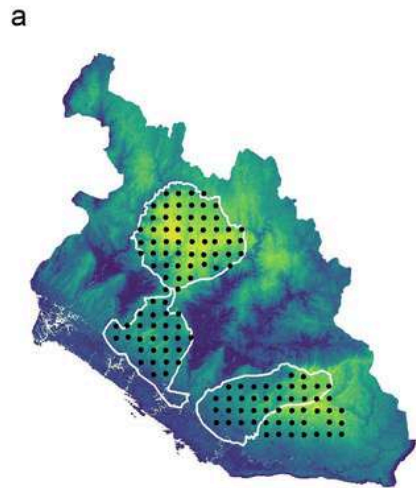
- Nakai-Nam Theun National Park is a **priority area for biodiversity conservation in the Annamites**
- The national park holds **globally significant populations of Annamite endemics**, including **two of some of the largest remaining populations in the world** of Endangered **Owston's civet** and Critically Endangered **Large-antlered Muntjac**
- This **wildlife monitoring program** with a **systematic large-scaled camera-trap survey** should be **replicated in the long-term every 3-5 years** as part of Nakai-Nam Theun National Park management strategy

### COVARIATE EFFECTS ON SPECIES OCCUPANCY PROBABILITY

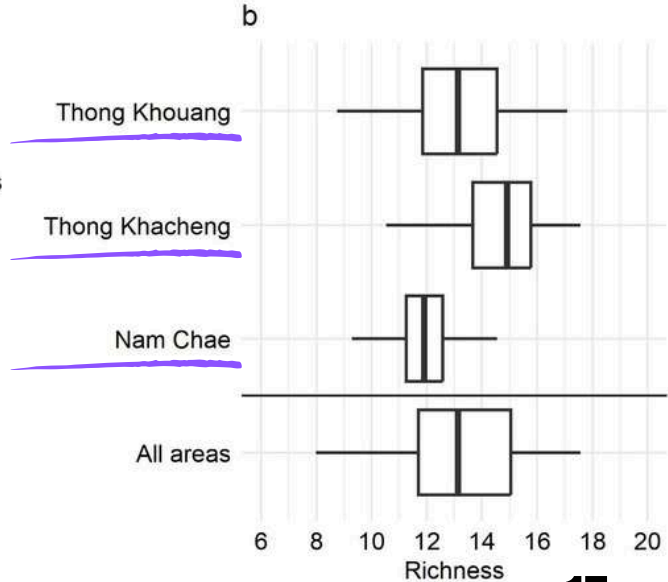


### SPECIES RICHNESS IN NAKAI-NAM THEUN NATIONAL PARK FOR THE SELECTED SPECIES

CAMERA-TRAPPING STATIONS AND DELINEATION OF THE THREE BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT ZONES



BOXPLOTS SHOWING SPECIES RICHNESS ACROSS THE THREE ZONES



# 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**.

*Recap since 2022:*

- The **field data collection** was conducted from 2022 to 2023 in the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park region. Overall, a total of **652 samples of elephant dung** were collected.
- In 2023, **DNA was extracted from the samples** in Vientiane under the supervision of the **Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD-Laos)**
- In 2023, we officialized a collaboration between Association Anoulak, the **Royal Zoological Society of Scotland** and the **Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle & Evolutive** to perform **(1) laboratory analysis for genotyping and sexing** the 652 DNA samples and **(2) modelling results to estimate population size and movement patterns**



## Progress in 2024:

Throughout the year 2024, the **genotyping of the samples** were conducted (80% done by end of December). The data analysis will be **continued and completed in**

**2025.**



# Survey and distribution of the Endangered *Luciocyprinus striolatus*

Project technical partner:



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 **2024**, Association Anoulak and FISHBIO agreed to conducting training for the local partners of Nakai-Nam Theun National Park to increase their capacity in basic knowledge and understanding of fishery management concepts and how to establish **Fish Conservation Zones**, including the process of **community-based fish conservation zones, community consultations, planning for FCZ regulations, and other data requirements for fishery management.**

With the financial support of Association (from grants), in **March 2024**, the FISHBIO-Lao program conducted a **training workshop** (March 21-25 2024) for local partners on setting up Fish Conservation Zones (FCZs), including on-site training.

The objectives of this training included:

- Sharing experiences and **results from 2022-2023 activities**
- **Conservation awareness** to local stakeholders
- Provide **technical training on establishing community FCZs** (procedure and technical management)
- Demonstration of a **pilot FCZ in the field**

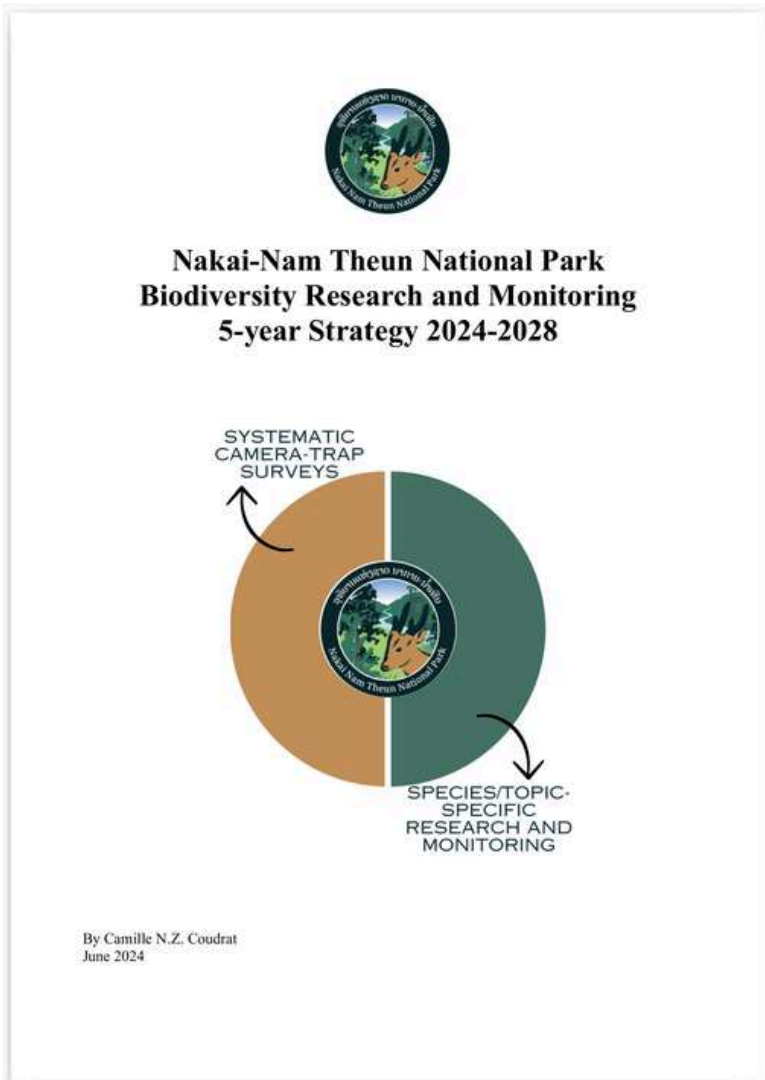
The **theory training** was conducted (March 21-22, 2024), at Nakai-Nam Theun National Park office with a total of 11 participants (5 females). At the end of the training, the participants joined a **fieldwork demonstration** (March 24-25, 2024), which included community consultation and a river site assessment (identification of deep pools and spawning habitats for fish conservation).

Thanks to our previous work implemented in collaboration with FISHBIO since 2022, FISHBIO leveraged additional funding for follow-up work on *Luciocyprinus striolatus* in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park from 2025, demonstrating the **impact of our pilot program.**



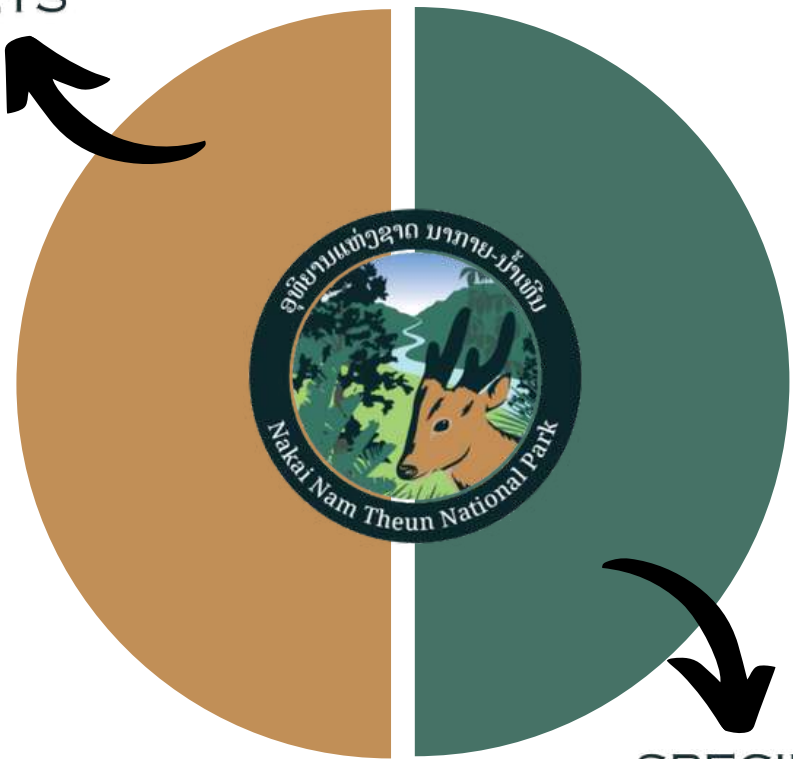
# Biodiversity Research and Monitoring Strategy for Nakai-Nam Theun National Park 2024-2028

In **2024**, Dr. Camille Coudrat was hired as a short-term consultant to produce the **Nakai-Nam Theun National Park Biodiversity research and Monitoring 5-year Strategy for 2024-2028**. This strategy was **based on the over ten years of interventions from Association Anoulak** in the National Park.



SYSTEMATIC CAMERA-TRAP SURVEYS

**RATIONALE:** The **conservation status of several globally threatened species** remains unknown in Nakai-Nam Theun. In addition, 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 population trend over time and across the national park.**



**RATIONALE:** Nakai-Nam Theun National Park holds **numerous species and groups of species of national and global conservation importance**. The appropriate **research approach for each species/species group and topic** (not covered by the camera-trap surveys) should be applied to provide information on their **status over time and across the national park.**

SPECIES/TOPIC-SPECIFIC RESEARCH AND MONITORING



## Community sustainable livelihoods in 2024

# 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

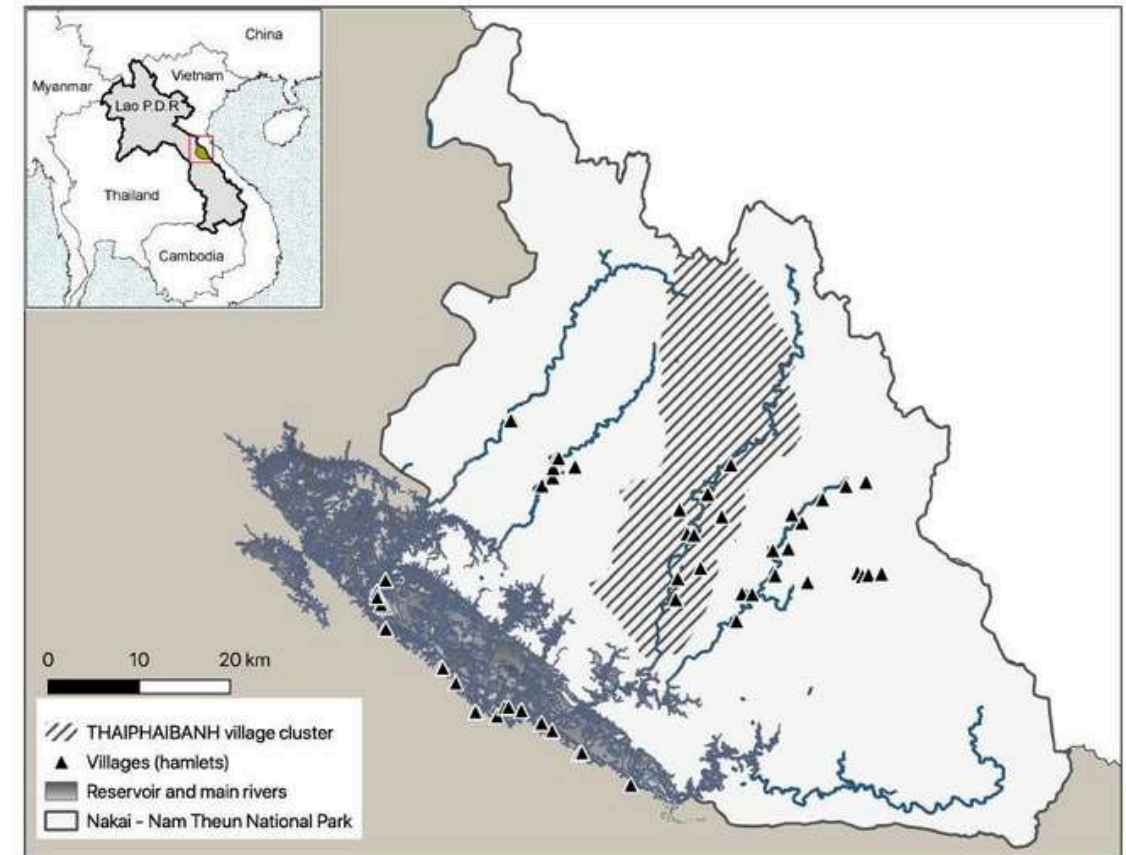
Since 2019, Association Anoulak initiated the program *Resilient Communities for Healthy Natural Ecosystems in the Annamites Mountains of Laos*

## 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 2024

In 2024, we continued 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 Handicraft production group at the village cluster level for Thaphaibanh cluster (4 villages)
- **Objective 2:** Natural Resources Management for sustainable collection of raw material for handicraft production, at the family (household) level in Thaphaibanh cluster (4 villages)
- **Progress in the support of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) business enterprise (focusing on traditional handicrafts Thaphaibanh Production Group):**

### CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

#### Skill Development:

- January-February 2024: Practical training for a young woman on rattan and Pandanus bag sewing in Thaveng village.
- February 2024: Training on rice box weaving for youth in Thongnoy village (5 trainees, 4 women).
- February 2024: Social media marketing training for village facilitators (9 participants, 1 woman).

#### Trader-Crafter Meetings:

- August 22-23, 2024: Discussed product improvement and market requirements with 31 participants (15 women).

#### Vocational Training:

- May-September 2024: Two young women attended sewing training in Thakek. One returned to work with Association Anoulak as technical staff and main trader based in Nakai (we supported her to set-up a shop in Nakai to act as middle trader between crafters, Handicraft village group, and businesses/customers)



# SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP ESTABLISHMENT

## Consultations and Meetings:

- January-August 2024: Meetings with district and village authorities to set up handicraft production groups.
- August 2024: Election of group leaders with 66 crafters completing member registration forms.
- December 2024: Sustainable Value Chain consultation meeting; Set-up of independent shop in Nakai; Action plans for 2025 finalised and disseminated.

## Crafting Campaigns:

- Organised in phases (August-November 2024) across four villages.
- Focused on insect damage control techniques such as boiling, calcium carbonate, and ash solutions.
- Achievements: 380, 385, 287, and 285 units crafted during each phase, respectively.

## One District One Product Label application for Nakai Handicrafts

- November 20, 2024: Six product types (tray, Khapha, basket, fish basket, gift basket, Pandanus) selected for applying to the ODOP labelling. The process is on-going. If approved by central level, these products will be the first ODOP products for the District of Nakai, ensuring visibility for marketing opportunity.

## Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)

- Regular Monitoring Visits: Supported facilitators in organising village meetings, production planning, and addressing crafting challenges (Jan, Apr, Jun, Dec 2024).

## VILLAGE HANDICRAFT FUND

From January to December 2024, village facilitators used the village handicraft fund to purchase handicraft from crafters with make benefit of 2% of total purchase and loan interest into the existing fund, therefore the total village handicraft fund of 2024 per village has increased.

- Makfueng Village Handicraft Fund (accumulated by December 2024): 11,353,000 LAK (~519 USD)
- Korbong Village Handicraft Fund (accumulated by December 2024): 18,133,000 LAK (~829 USD)
- Vangtheunkham Village Handicraft Fund (accumulated by December 2024): 16,868,000 LAK (~771 USD)





Insect damage control techniques: boiling, calcium carbonate, and ash solutions.



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

In the year 2024, the accumulated income directly to crafters (total at the village level, in Thaphaibanh cluster [4 villages] and Teung cluster [2 villages added in 2024]) is as follow:

- Korbong village: 23,987,000 LAK (~1096 USD) with 1236 units sold
- Makfueng village: 28,725,000 LAK (~1313 USD) with 1811 units sold
- Thaphaibanh village: 5,383,000 LAK (~246 USD) with 562 units sold
- Vangtheunkham village: 22,740,000 LAK (~1040 USD) with 888 units sold
- Teung village: 15,939,000 LAK (~729 USD) with 1054 units sold
- Thongnoy village: 2,778,000 LAK (~127 USD) with 204 units sold





- **Progress on handicraft marketing:**

**Participation in Fairs and Festivals:**

- March to December 2024: Handicrafts sold in a total of **eight national and regional events**, including Lao CSO Meeting, Vietnam-Laos Trade Fair, 23rd Lao Handicraft Festival and many others, contributing to market exposure and sales.



- **Progress on participatory sustainable use and management of natural resources:**

## CAPACITY BUILDING

- Training sessions conducted on Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) assessment and management for local stakeholders and village facilitators.
- Study tour to Khamkeuth District provided practical knowledge on rattan seedling transplantation and plantation techniques.



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Consultation meetings with villagers to select participants and plan actions for NTFP garden development.
- 55 families (48 crafters, 7 non-crafters) committed to NTFP garden activities.



## NTFP GARDEN IMPLEMENTATION

- 51 household plots prepared and measured; fencing materials provided.
- Follow-up on garden fencing progress showed completion by July 2024.
- Assessments of family garden plots resulted in 178 plant taxa identified, including rattan, bamboo, and Pandanus.
- A total of 2,354 seedlings (including 21 different plant taxa) were planted by villagers for crafting and food purposes, with a survival rate of 84% as of October 2024.



- **Progress on Research and Evaluation of project as a whole:**

Project technical partner:



**1) Innovative Methods of Association Anoulak used in the sustainable livelihood community project in Nakai National Park, Khammouan Province: Implemented by social scientist research team from the National University of Laos in January 2024**

**KEY FINDINGS**

- **Community Perceptions and Benefits:**

- The project is highly regarded by local communities and public partners.
- While not all households directly benefit economically, collective benefits include cultural preservation, biodiversity conservation, and alignment with government policies on forest management and green growth.

- **Innovative Practices:**

- Evidence-based research and bottom-up participatory planning.
- Transparent and efficient financial and resource management.
- Collaboration with public and private stakeholders.
- Staff-led role modeling to inspire village facilitators and communities.

- **Sustainability Considerations:**

- Strong willingness from local authorities and facilitators is essential for long-term success.
- Support from district authorities remains crucial for project continuity.

**2) Wild Happiness Index - Human well-being for evaluating a community-based conservation program in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, Laos: Implemented by social scientist research team from the National University of Laos in October 2024**

The Wild Happiness Index was developed by **OneNature**, designed to assess life satisfaction based on many domains of well-being (including health, community, economy, social support, etc.), as well as how individual and community value wildlife around them

The result of this research will be obtained in 2025.





## Conservation awareness in 2024

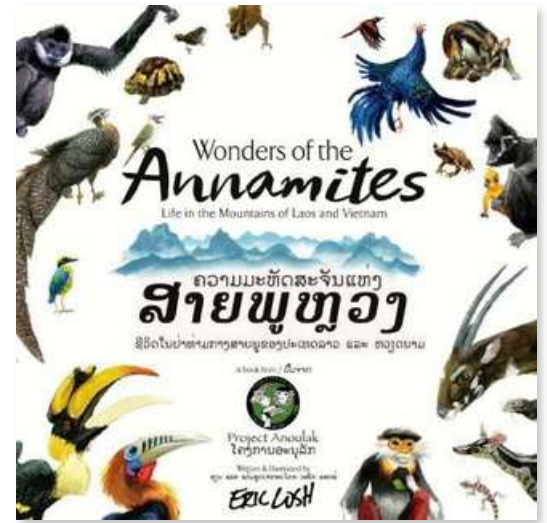
# Conservation awareness published books and posters

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 and 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.**



## 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.



## 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 avec le Laos in English-Lao edition

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



In 2024, these publications continued to be disseminated through different channels and at several events.






# Conservation awareness NEW RESOURCES produced in 2024

## Species Fact Sheets in English and Lao (continued)

### ASIAN ELEPHANT



**ECOLOGY**  
**Distribution & Range:** Southeast Asia, Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and northern Viet Nam.  
**Habitat:** Grassland, tropical evergreen forest, and dry dipterocarp forest.  
**Diet:** Frugivorous, eat a large variety of plants that vary depending on season and locality.

**CONSERVATION**  
**Conservation status:** Endangered  
**Major Threats:** Targeted hunting for local consumption or for national and international trade (for traditional medicine, bush meat, and pet trade), and habitat loss.  
**Conservation Action:** Research and monitoring, habitat protection, and education.

**ACTIVITY & SOCIAL TRAITS**  
**Social Structure:** Males form one-male groups with 0-10 females, with females forming smaller groups.  
**Activity:** Diurnal and arboreal.  
**Reproduction:** Breeding occurs year-round and is induced by both sexes by displaying or their mate.  
**Gestation:** 18-20 days.  
**Number of offspring:** 1 or 2.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**  
**Family:** Elephantidae, a large mammal with a trunk (the only other species in this family is the mammoth).  
**Weight:** 2700-5420 kg.  
**Appearance:** Large and grey with a proboscis or trunk, and ears that are small relative to the head. Male elephants have tusks.

**Species Protection Status in Lao:** Protection category 1, rare, near extinct in the development of social educational scientific resources # 1 anywhere and at all.

**ພິວັດວິທະຍາ**  
**ພື້ນທີ່ອາໄສ**  
**ສັນຍາ Mammalia**  
**ສັນຍາ Primateles**  
**ສັນຍາ Elephant**


**ພັນທະກຸ່ມ**  
**ສັດປ່າປ່າກຸ່ມ**  
**ສັດປ່າປ່າກຸ່ມ**  
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### RED SHANKED DOUC



**ECOLOGY**  
**Distribution & Range:** Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam, endemic to the Annamite Mountains.  
**Habitat:** Evergreen, mixed broadleaf/deciduous, and limestone forests.  
**Diet:** Frugivorous, eat leaves, fruits, seeds, flowers, and bark.

**CONSERVATION**  
**Conservation status:** Critically Endangered  
**Major Threats:** Targeted hunting for local consumption or the national and international trade (for traditional medicine, bush meat, and pet trade), and habitat loss.  
**Conservation Action:** Research and monitoring, education, and habitat protection.

**ACTIVITY & SOCIAL TRAITS**  
**Social Structure:** Lives in one-male groups with 0-10 females, with females forming smaller groups.  
**Activity:** Diurnal and arboreal.  
**Reproduction:** Breeding occurs year-round and is induced by both sexes by displaying or their mate.  
**Gestation:** 131 days.  
**Number of offspring:** 1.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**  
**Family:** Cercopithecoidea, an African or Asian monkey.  
**Weight:** 9-11 kg (males), 7-10 kg (females).  
**Appearance:** Grey white and red coloration with long white whiskers around the face, and a long white tail. Males are larger and have a slightly different coloration than females.

**Species Protection Status in Lao:** Protection category 1, rare, near extinct in the development of social educational scientific resources # 1 anywhere and at all.


**ພິວັດວິທະຍາ**  
**ພື້ນທີ່ອາໄສ**  
**ສັນຍາ Mammalia**  
**ສັນຍາ Primateles**  
**ສັນຍາ Cercopithecoidea**

**ພັນທະກຸ່ມ**  
**ສັດປ່າປ່າກຸ່ມ**  
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### LAOTIAN LANGUR



**ECOLOGY**  
**Distribution & Range:** Lao PDR, endemic to the Annamite Mountains.  
**Habitat:** Forests and rocky areas with large rock faces, associated with limestone karsts.  
**Diet:** Frugivorous.

**CONSERVATION**  
**Conservation status:** Endangered  
**Major Threats:** Targeted hunting for local consumption or for national and international trade (for traditional medicine, bush meat, or the pet trade), and habitat loss.  
**Conservation Action:** Habitat protection, education, and ecotourism.

**ACTIVITY & SOCIAL TRAITS**  
**Social Structure:** Live in groups of 15-25 individuals.  
**Activity:** Both arboreal and terrestrial, diurnal and gregarious.  
**Gestation:** Most likely 200 days.  
**Number of offspring:** 1 or 2.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**  
**Family:** Cercopithecoidea, an African or Asian monkey.  
**Weight:** 6-8 kg.  
**Appearance:** Black body with white around the head, and a long black tail.

**Species Protection Status in Lao:** Protection category 1, rare, near extinct in the development of social educational scientific resources # 1 anywhere and at all.

**ພິວັດວິທະຍາ**  
**ພື້ນທີ່ອາໄສ**  
**ສັນຍາ Mammalia**  
**ສັນຍາ Primateles**  
**ສັນຍາ Cercopithecoidea**

**ພັນທະກຸ່ມ**  
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### SOUTHERN WHITE CHEEKED GIBBON



**ECOLOGY**  
**Distribution & Range:** Lao PDR and Viet Nam, endemic to the Annamite Mountains.  
**Habitat:** Broadleaf evergreen forest, and both limestone and non-limestone forests.  
**Diet:** Frugivorous, eat mainly fruit with some leaves and insects.

**CONSERVATION**  
**Conservation status:** Critically Endangered  
**Major Threats:** Targeted hunting for local consumption or for national and international trade (for traditional medicine, bush meat, and the pet trade), and habitat loss.  
**Conservation Action:** Research and monitoring, habitat protection, and education.

**ACTIVITY & SOCIAL TRAITS**  
**Social Structure:** Monogamous family group.  
**Activity:** Diurnal, arboreal and terrestrial, spend their time resting, traveling, feeding, and singing.  
**Reproduction:** Most likely form monogamous pair bonds.  
**Gestation:** Most likely 200-212 days.  
**Number of offspring:** Most likely 1.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**  
**Family:** Hylobatidae, a lesser ape or "gibbon".  
**Weight:** 7-9 kg.  
**Appearance:** Males are black with white around their mouths and females are black with a black crown on their heads. They have very long arms and lack a tail.

**Species Protection Status in Lao:** Protection category 1, rare, near extinct in the development of social educational scientific resources # 1 anywhere and at all.

**ພິວັດວິທະຍາ**  
**ພື້ນທີ່ອາໄສ**  
**ສັນຍາ Mammalia**  
**ສັນຍາ Primateles**  
**ສັນຍາ Hylobatidae**

**ພັນທະກຸ່ມ**  
**ສັດປ່າປ່າກຸ່ມ**  
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### NORTHERN BUFF CHEEKED GIBBON



**ECOLOGY**  
**Distribution & Range:** Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam, endemic to the Annamite Mountains.  
**Habitat:** Evergreen and semi-evergreen forests.  
**Diet:** Frugivorous, eat leaves, shoots, flowers, and sometimes meat.

**CONSERVATION**  
**Conservation status:** Endangered  
**Major Threats:** Targeted hunting for local consumption or for national and international trade (for traditional medicine, bush meat, and the pet trade), and habitat loss.  
**Conservation Action:** Research and monitoring, habitat protection, education, rehabilitation, and re-introduction.

**ACTIVITY & SOCIAL TRAITS**  
**Social Structure:** Monogamous family group.  
**Activity:** Arboreal and diurnal, spend their time resting, traveling, feeding, and singing.  
**Reproduction:** Monogamous pair bonds.  
**Gestation:** Most likely 200-212 days.  
**Number of offspring:** Most likely 1.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**  
**Family:** Hylobatidae, a lesser ape or "gibbon".  
**Weight:** 7-9 kg.  
**Appearance:** Males are black with reddish tan cheeks and females are tan with black crown on their heads. They have very long arms and lack a tail.

**Species Protection Status in Lao:** Protection category 1, rare, near extinct in the development of social educational scientific resources # 1 anywhere and at all.

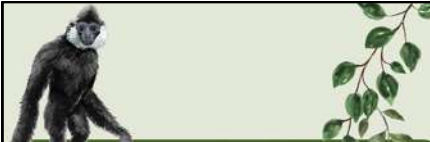
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**ພື້ນທີ່ອາໄສ**  
**ສັນຍາ Mammalia**  
**ສັນຍາ Primateles**  
**ສັນຍາ Hylobatidae**

**ພັນທະກຸ່ມ**  
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### NORTHERN WHITE CHEEKED GIBBON



**ECOLOGY**  
**Distribution & Range:** Lao PDR, Viet Nam, and possibly southwestern China.  
**Habitat:** Evergreen and semi-evergreen forest.  
**Diet:** Frugivorous, eat mainly fruit with some leaves and insects.

**CONSERVATION**  
**Conservation status:** Critically Endangered  
**Major Threats:** Targeted hunting for local consumption or for national and international trade (for traditional medicine, bush meat, and the pet trade), and habitat loss.  
**Conservation Action:** Research and education.

**ACTIVITY & SOCIAL TRAITS**  
**Social Structure:** Typically live in groups of 3-4 individuals.  
**Activity:** Diurnal, arboreal and terrestrial, spend their time resting, feeding, traveling, and singing.  
**Reproduction:** Monogamous with lasting pair bonds.  
**Gestation:** 200-212 days.  
**Number of offspring:** 1.

**PHYSICAL TRAITS**  
**Family:** Hylobatidae, a lesser ape or "gibbon".  
**Weight:** 7-9 kg.  
**Appearance:** Males are black with white around their faces, and females are tan with a black crown on their heads. They have very long arms and lack a tail.

**Species Protection Status in Lao:** Protection category 1, rare, near extinct in the development of social educational scientific resources # 1 anywhere and at all.

**ພິວັດວິທະຍາ**  
**ພື້ນທີ່ອາໄສ**  
**ສັນຍາ Mammalia**  
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# Conservation awareness NEW RESOURCES produced in 2024

## Publications-based Posters

### Camera-trapping reveals new insights in the ecology of three sympatric muntjacs in an overhunted biodiversity hotspot

*Samra Vayssi, Anusit Abrams, Camille N. Z. Couard, Chantaphone Keatingkong, K. Ngyun, Jaganathadas, Andrew Wray, Zoran Tin, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfzbs/obad018>*

#### INTRODUCTION

- Annamites ecoregion exceptionally high mammal richness and endemism:
  - Large endemic ungulate *Porcupine* (*Haplorhina leucurus*)
  - Northern red muntjac *M. reevesi*
  - Annamite dark muntjac complex *M. rosalia*/*trungsonensis* (endemic)
- To protect the remaining populations of muntjacs in the Annamites, it is important to gather information on their ecology, distribution, and population status in priority areas.

#### METHODOLOGY

**Systematic landscape-scale camera-trapping in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park:**

- Dry season of 2018 (February 2018 to May 2018) and 2019 (November 2018 to May 2019)
- 131 camera stations (5.5 m apart) (12 cameras/station, 256 operational cameras)
- Total survey effort = 20,183 camera-trap-nights

**Aims:**

- Understand muntjac ecology and distribution
- Population trends monitoring

#### MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

**Annamite dark muntjac:**

- Endemism found at higher elevations: consistent aspect of Annamite dark muntjac ecology
- Percentage of Area Occupied = 0.28 (0.18-0.38)

**Northern red muntjac:**

- Occupancy peaked at approximately 1250 m asl, but declined at elevations above this
- Percentage of Area Occupied = 0.37 (0.15-0.42)

**Large-antlered muntjac:**

- Found at higher elevations: contrasting from previous assumptions that the species mainly occurs below 1000 m asl
- Widely spread across the elevational range in NNTP
- Occupancy was strongly influenced by accessibility and was the only one of the three muntjacs affected exclusively by anthropogenic factors
- Percentage of Area Occupied = 0.33 (0.22-0.45)

**TAKE AWAY MESSAGE**

- Nakai-Nam Theun NP is a global stronghold for large-antlered muntjac.
- Sharp contrast to the situation across most of the species' range, especially in Viet Nam.

### Wildlife Populations Monitoring with Systematic Camera-trap Surveys in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park 2018-2023

*Samra Vayssi, Anusit Abrams, Camille N. Z. Couard, Chantaphone Keatingkong, K. Ngyun, Jaganathadas, Andrew Wray, Zoran Tin, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfzbs/obad018>*

**Strategic rationale to evaluate the conservation effect implemented, crucial to monitor population abundance of key indicator species over time:**

Year	2018-2019	2020	2022-2023
<b>Population</b>	248,418	248,418	248,418
<b>Area</b>	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
<b>Population Density</b>	0.248	0.248	0.248



### The Annamite Mountains - A Biodiverse Ecosystem at Risk: A Case Study in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, Lao P.D.R.

*Samra Vayssi, Anusit Abrams, Camille N. Z. Couard, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfzbs/obad018>*

#### THE ANNAMITE MOUNTAINS

- The Annamite Mountains extend from northern Viet Nam along the border with Lao PDR and south through southern Viet Nam
- One of the identified Key Biodiversity Areas within the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot
- One of the richest regions of biodiversity and endemism in Southeast Asia due to its unique geographical location

#### NAKAI-NAM THEUN NATIONAL PARK

- One of the most important areas for biodiversity conservation in the region and globally
- A large knowledge gap remains which is unknown about the diversity and the current conservation status of flora, fauna, and the park's management, particularly in Viet Nam
- Over 80% of its original forest cover
- Very habitat type diversity:
  - Dry evergreen forest, evergreen forest, semi-deciduous forest, dipterocarp forest, evergreen forest
  - 100-1800 m above sea level (33 elevation ranges)

#### Flora

- Rare biodiversity exceptionally rich comprising mostly evergreen forest
- 1000+ species of plants, including many species of medicinal plants
- The park is home to many species of medicinal plants

#### Fauna

- Numerous Annamite endemic mammal species found in the Nakai-Nam Theun National Park
- Numerous globally threatened mammal species of high conservation value in threatened and globally rare
- But many mammal species have already gone extinct in the past three decades

#### Endemism endemic mammal species in Nakai-Nam Theun

**Asian small-clawed otter:** *Amurbaea* spp. (Asian small-clawed otter)

**Eurasian otter:** *Amurbaea* spp. (Eurasian otter)

**Northern white-cheeked gibbon:** *Hylobates* spp. (Northern white-cheeked gibbon)

**Northern white-cheeked gibbon:** *Hylobates* spp. (Northern white-cheeked gibbon)

**Northern white-cheeked gibbon:** *Hylobates* spp. (Northern white-cheeked gibbon)

**White-cheeked gibbon:** *Hylobates* spp. (White-cheeked gibbon)

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#### Take away message

- Nakai-Nam Theun National Park includes a high level of biodiversity, a variety of ecosystems, and a unique geographical and climatic patterns
- But the region faces numerous threats: under dramatic and complex environmental and human social threats: many large wildlife species have already gone locally extinct
- The national park is still considered one of the most important protected areas for its conservation significance at the national and global level, as well as for its diversity of fauna and endemism
- Long-term effective management is key to conserving this bio-cultural diversity

### Biological Research, Throat Analysis, and Conservation Activities for Endangered *Lucioyprinus striolatus* (Paai Kang) in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park

*Camille N. Z. Couard, Oubonvannone S. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfzbs/obad018>*

#### INTRODUCTION

- *Lucioyprinus striolatus* is a species of cyprinid native to parts of Laos and China (but already extinct from China)
- Laos is the only country where the species can be protected
- Listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
- The abundance of the species is rapidly declining. The main threats to the species include hydropower development, climate change-induced droughts, use of destructive fishing gear, overfishing of their prey

#### METHODOLOGY

- A pilot project implemented in 2022-2023 to understand the distribution, life cycle and threats of *Lucioyprinus striolatus* in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park to develop future conservation plans
- Project objectives:
  - Assess the threats present: abundance, distribution movements, and life cycle of the species in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park
- Main activities:
  - Environmental DNA water samples collected in Nam Theun, Nam Theun, Nam Noi
  - Individual fish tagging
  - Water quality assessment
  - Interviews with local communities
  - Questionnaires to local communities on the species

#### MAIN FINDINGS

- 72% of the water samples collected detected *Lucioyprinus striolatus* (18 samples) from Nam Kot, Nam Theun and Nam Noi
- Three individual fish were captured, tagged, released from Nam Theun: no recapture of these individuals was reported from local fishers
- A total of 33 recordings of water quality parameters along the Nam Theun and Nam Noi: average water flow = 0.3-0.9 m<sup>3</sup>/s, water temperature = 12.5-25.8°C, pH = 7.2-8.0, dissolved oxygen = 0.00-10.15-14 mg/l, conductivity = 130-291 μS/cm
- The main threats identified on the population of *Lucioyprinus striolatus* in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park:
  - Fading of the species is a large species of hydrothermal habitat for subsistence food and/or local trade
  - Depletion of prays of *Lucioyprinus striolatus* as a result of over-fishing and unregulated fishing by local communities for subsistence food and/or local trade
  - Catch-and-release tourism attraction and promotion within the national park (without prior impact assessment and management plan)
  - Seasonal droughts
  - A lack of awareness on the species' conservation value by local communities and local authorities
  - A lack of conservation plan for the species in the national park

#### TAKE AWAY MESSAGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Lucioyprinus striolatus* is under threat at all locations in Laos: Nam Park in Oudomxay Province, Xay Champhone in Bolikhamsay Province and Nakai-Nam Theun National Park in Khammouane Province.
- Nakai-Nam Theun National Park represents the best location in the world for the long-term conservation of the species
- Recommendations for the protection and conservation of *Lucioyprinus striolatus* in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park:
  - Set up community-based fish conservation zones within the national park targeted at *Lucioyprinus striolatus*
  - Follow-up study to understand the reproduction cycle in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park
  - Before authorizing and promoting catch-and-release practice in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, conduct an impact assessment and management plan
  - Develop community-based ecotourism tours to observe the species in its natural habitat. Ecotourism must benefit the local communities to ensure their involvement in the protection of the species
  - Conduct awareness raising for local authorities and local communities on the conservation value of the species

### Multi-species occupancy modeling of ground-dwelling mammals in central Laos: a case study for monitoring in tropical forests

*Samra Vayssi, Camille N. Z. Couard, Jaganathadas, Andrew Wray, Zoran Tin, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfzbs/obad018>*

#### INTRODUCTION

- The tropical forests of mainland Southeast Asia are among the most biodiverse and threatened forest systems globally
- Unsustainable hunting and habitat loss have led to widespread mammal population declines in Southeast Asia
- Robust monitoring of population trends over time and space is a key component of national park management strategy
- Systematic camera trap surveys are the best method for population monitoring of terrestrial forest mammals
- Multi-species occupancy models provide robust estimates of species occurrence, abundance, richness and distribution at the community level

#### METHODOLOGY

- Landscape-scale systematic camera-trapping survey in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park in 2020 (10,794 camera-trap days for 131 operational stations (256 cameras))
- A multi-species occupancy analysis

#### OBJECTIVES

- Estimate occupancy and species richness within three Biodiversity Priority Zones: Nam Chao, Thong Kaching, Thong Kouang
- Assess anthropogenic and ecological factors influencing species distribution in the national park
- Establish the methodology as part of the long-term wildlife monitoring program for the national park

#### MAIN FINDINGS

- Total of 40 terrestrial mammals were detected, including 5 Annamite endemics and 18 threatened species
- 28 species with sufficient detections to be included in the multi-species occupancy analysis
- Overall species richness increased with remoteness and elevation
- mean (SD) predicted species richness:
  - Thong Kaching Zone: 14.6 (± 1.50)
  - Thong Kouang Zone: 13.2 (± 1.64)
  - Nam Chao Zone: 11.8 (± 1.15)

#### CONCLUSIONS

- Nakai-Nam Theun National Park is a priority area for biodiversity conservation in the Annamites
- The national park holds globally significant populations of Annamite endemics, including two of some of the largest remaining populations in the world of Endangered Duester's civet and Critically Endangered Large-antlered Muntjac
- This wildlife monitoring program with a systematic landscape-scale camera-trap survey should be replicated in the long-term every 3-5 years as part of Nakai-Nam Theun National Park monitoring strategy

### Taxonomic status of other species in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, Lao PDR, based on DNA evidence

*Camille N. Z. Couard, Nivitha Chantong, Marianne Sornatt, Souchasriyaporn Worasriwong, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfzbs/obad018>*

#### INTRODUCTION

- The populations of Asian otter species have been declining
- Main threats:
  - Habitat loss
  - Decreasing number of their prey due to overfishing by humans
  - Illegal hunting for wildlife trade (for traditional medicine or for their fur)
  - Illegal capture to supply exotic pet markets
- The distribution and conservation status of otters in Asia are little known and understudied
- In Laos, three otter species have been confirmed to occur: protected under the national law
- Nakai-Nam Theun National Park has been identified as an important area for the conservation of otters in Lao PDR and Southeast Asia

#### METHODOLOGY

- Decline inter-specific DNA surveys in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park in the Annamite Mountains of Lao PDR:
  - From December 2019 to May 2020
  - Based on mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)
  - Laboratory analysis at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Kasetsart University, Thailand
- Aims:
  - Identify otter species occurring in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park
  - Map the spatial distribution of genetic diversity and evolutionary relationships of other populations using 1200bp Cytb gene + Control Region and mtDNA

#### MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

- Total of 96 fecal samples analyzed
- Two species identified in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park:
  - Asian small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinereus*) (7 samples, 32.5% of samples)
  - Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*) (46 samples, 82.5% of samples)
- **ASIAN SMALL-CLAWED OTTER:**
  - Only one haplotype was detected (AC04) (not detected previously in Asia)
- **EURASIAN OTTER:**
  - Three haplotypes were detected (L1L1L1, L1L1L2, L1L1L3)
  - Calculated haplotype diversity of 0.690 and nucleotide diversity of 0.0041 based on mtDNA
  - All Eurasian otter haplotypes were newly characterized and clustered within the strongly supported South-Southeast-Asian clade of *Lutra lutra*
  - Compared to the Eurasian clade, the high mtDNA diversity of *Lutra lutra* in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park potentially reflects long-term demographic stability

### New insights in the Distribution of White-Cheeked Gibbons *Nomascus siki* and *N. leucogenys* in Central Lao PDR

*Camille N. Z. Couard, Maedee M. Votrà Vydrova H. 2024*

#### INTRODUCTION

- Gibbons of the genus *Nomascus* are the most threatened of the four Hominidae genera
- The Northern White-Cheeked Gibbon *Nomascus leucogenys* and the Southern White-Cheeked Gibbon *Nomascus siki* have a restricted global range. They are endemic to Lao PDR and Viet Nam
- In central Lao PDR, the distribution range limit between *N. leucogenys* and *N. siki* still needs to be determined, preventing appropriate conservation planning
- It has been speculated that the Nam Theun-Nam Kading river represents the geographical barrier between the two species, but this needs more investigation
- Gibbon songs are taxonomically distinct between species and, when analyzed, can identify the taxonomic status of a species

#### METHODOLOGY

- Aim: investigate the distribution of *N. leucogenys* and *N. siki* in central Lao PDR
- across two provinces: Bolikhamsay and Khammouane
- We collected gibbon song recordings:
  - An adult gibbon song recording: 96 *Nomascus* gibbon songs included in this analysis
  - 16 *N. siki* gibbon recordings: 24 song recordings of *Nomascus leucogenys* and 8 *N. siki* from 12 European ecotourist facilities
- We extracted significantly different acoustic parameters for males (n=10) and females (n=22) from songs recorded in captivity, used as training data for a species classification analysis of vocal recordings of unknown species from the wild

#### MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

- Vocalizations were assigned to both species on both sides of the Nam Theun-Nam Kading:
  - **Male calls:**
    - North of river: 84% *N. leucogenys* and 20% *N. siki*
    - South of river: 62% *N. leucogenys* and 27% *N. siki*
  - **Female calls:**
    - North of river: 94% *N. leucogenys* and 6% *N. siki*
    - South of river: 40% *N. leucogenys* and 52% *N. siki*
- We propose two hypotheses:
  - The vocalization characteristics between the two species in the region where the geographical distribution of both species meet (along the Nam Theun-Nam Kading in central Lao PDR) do not allow a clear delineation between the two species
  - The Nam Theun-Nam Kading River does not represent a clear geographic barrier between the two species

# Capacity Building in 2024



In 2024, we launched OUR NEW PROGRAM:

Project partner: econox

## Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation

**At the heart of nature conservation are people.** Particularly the new generation of Lao nationals who will drive the change to solve environmental and nature conservation challenges.

**In 2024, we launched the Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation.**

Our **main goal** with this program is to **inspire and encourage the young generation in Laos to pursue careers in the environment and conservation sector.**

In July 2024, we joined hands and skills with **EconoxLaos**, a social enterprise co-founded by three young Lao nationals with nature and sustainability in their heart, to co-organize and implement the program.

A Project from:

Association Anoulak  
econox  
Your partner in environmental conservation and sustainability

Sponsored by:

Mandai NATURE  
Wilhelma Zoologisch-Botanischer Garten Stuttgart  
DENVER ZOO

ຊາວໜຸ່ມລາວ ໃນພາລະກິດ  
ປົກປັກຮັກສາທຳມະຊາດ  
ຫຼັກສູດການເຝິກອົບຮົມ 2024

LAO YOUTH ON A *Mission!*  
FOR *Nature* CONSERVATION  
MAKE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE

ມາຮ່ວມກັນເຄື່ອນໄຫວ  
ເພື່ອສ້າງຄວາມປ່ຽນແປງ  
JOIN THE  
MOVEMENT  
BE PART OF THE  
CHANGE

# Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation

Project partner: econox

From **over 100 applications** from **Lao nationals aged 18-30**, **thirty-one outstanding candidates** from across Laos (**20 females, 11 males, from 09 provinces**) were selected to participate in this **first-of-its-kind 2024 pilot program**.

Our main criteria were **passion and commitment to pursue a career in conservation**. We (Association Anoulak and EconoxLaos) implemented the intensive **two-week program on 15-27 July 2024**.

To do so, **we partnered with over 20 organizations working in Laos** (with a total of 49 people contributing), either in the **nature conservation sector or capacity building sector**, to deliver a **unique and diverse program**, including case studies on conservation programs implemented in Laos as well as several soft skills workshops to provide the candidates the best chance for their future.

**LAO YOUTH ON A Mission FOR Nature CONSERVATION**

**Operation Plan = A successful Partnership story !**

**The donors**

- Wilhelma Zoologisch-Botanischer Garten Stuttgart
- Mandai NATURE
- DENVER ZOO
- Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany Vientiane

**The co-organizers**

- Association Anoulak
- econox

**The content delivery partners**

- WWF LAOS
- WCS
- IUCN
- FREETHEBEARS
- elephant conservation center
- Zero Waste Laos
- Implemented by giz
- LCTW
- SAOLA FOUNDATION
- UR
- SEED
- NREP
- RDA
- ECO NEWS
- XMT (KM+Technologies)
- katalyst PARTNERS
- STELLA
- STARTNOVATION
- MIND MEDIA
- GLOBAL SHAPERS COMMUNITY VIENTIANE
- LAB DE LINES

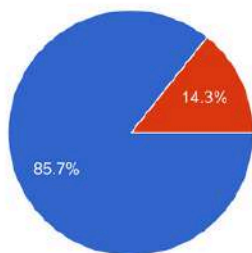
# Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation

Project partner: 

This program was also an excellent opportunity for networking with fellow youth and with conservation partners for potential internships or full-time roles. Among the exciting daily programs was a visit to the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife's brand-new site, which inspired the participants. The program also included a final team project proposal and pitch to put their ideas and skills into practice and get the chance to receive seed funding to implement their project.

Following the training, 79% of the participants said that all or most of the content covered in the training was new knowledge to them, and 82% felt this training program would help them decide what career/studies they want to pursue. Overall, 86% of the participants were 'completely' satisfied with the training program. When asked what are the most important takeaway messages they learned during the program, participants consistently mentioned the connection with other youth and the new skills and knowledge they gained.

ເຈົ້າມີຄວາມເພິ່ງພໍໃຈຕໍ່ໂຄງການແນວໃດ? / How satisfied are you with the program overall?  
28 responses



- ເພິ່ງພໍໃຈສູງ / Completely satisfied
- ເພິ່ງພໍໃຈປານກາງ / Moderately satisfied
- ບໍ່ຄ່ອຍເພິ່ງພໍໃຈ / Not much satisfied
- ບໍ່ເພິ່ງພໍໃຈເລີຍ / Not at all satisfied

## LAO YOUTH ON A *Mission* FOR *Nature* CONSERVATION

ແຜນກິດຈະກຳຫຼັກສູດການເຝິກອົບຮົມ 2024

**Module 01**  
15 July 2024

Orientation, Introduction to Youth For Planet and team building



**Module 02**  
16 July 2024

Introduction to biodiversity



**Module 03**  
16 July 2024

Youth changemakers: role of young volunteers in conservation



**Module 04**  
17 July 2024

Wildlife Conservation and Wildlife Monitoring

**Module 05**  
17 July 2024

Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking



**Module 06**  
18 July 2024

Biodiversity research for conservation Examples of Lao case studies

## WEEK 1

ແຜນກິດຈະກຳຫຼັກສູດການເຝິກອົບຮົມ 2024

**Module 07**  
18 July 2024

Communication and storytelling matter for conservation



**Movie night**  
18 July 2024

Short films for conservation and panel with Wildlife Photographer



**Module 08**  
19 July 2024

Illegal wildlife trade / CITES / IUCN Red List

**Module 09**  
19 July 2024

Law enforcement, Patrols, Smart system



**Talk session**  
19 July 2024

Leadership and decision making skills in the time of crisis



**Excursion**  
20 July 2024

Learning trip at Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife (LCTW)



## LAO YOUTH ON A *Mission* FOR *Nature* CONSERVATION

ແຜນກິດຈະກຳຫຼັກສູດການເຝິກອົບຮົມ 2024

**Module 10**  
22 July 2024

Communities, livelihoods, sustainability etc. Human Social aspect



**Module 11**  
22 July 2024

Career preferences and passion finding & CV writing and self-preparation for job



**Module 12**  
23 July 2024

Animal rescue / animal welfare / breeding-reintroduction programs



**Module 13**  
23 July 2024

Project proposal writing and project management



**Module 14**  
23 July 2024

Lao vegetation diversity and conservation effort



**Module 15**  
24 July 2024

Project idea presentation and elevator pitch



## WEEK 2

ແຜນກິດຈະກຳຫຼັກສູດການເຝິກອົບຮົມ 2024

**Roundtable**  
24 July 2024

"my journey as a conservationist in Laos"



**GIZ**  
25 July 2024

biodiversity conservation in Laos



**Hackathon**  
25 July 2024

Hackathon introduction and idea pitching



**Hackathon**  
26 July 2024

Meet mentors and prepare the project plan



**Hackathon**  
27 July 2024

Submit the presentation



**Pitching Day**  
27 July 2024

Award announcement and closing the project



# Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation

Project partner: econoX

The future is in the hands of the youth. Laos has a bright community of young people ready to tackle society's problems with passion, skills, and energy. We need to provide them with the means and opportunities!



LAO YOUTH ON A *Mission*  
FOR *Nature* CONSERVATION

- 102 applications
- **31 selected candidates**
- 20 females/11 males
- 18-30 years old (avg. 22)
- 09 Provinces from Laos

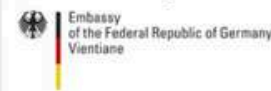
A Project from:



Sponsored by:



Biodiversity Hack Sponsor:

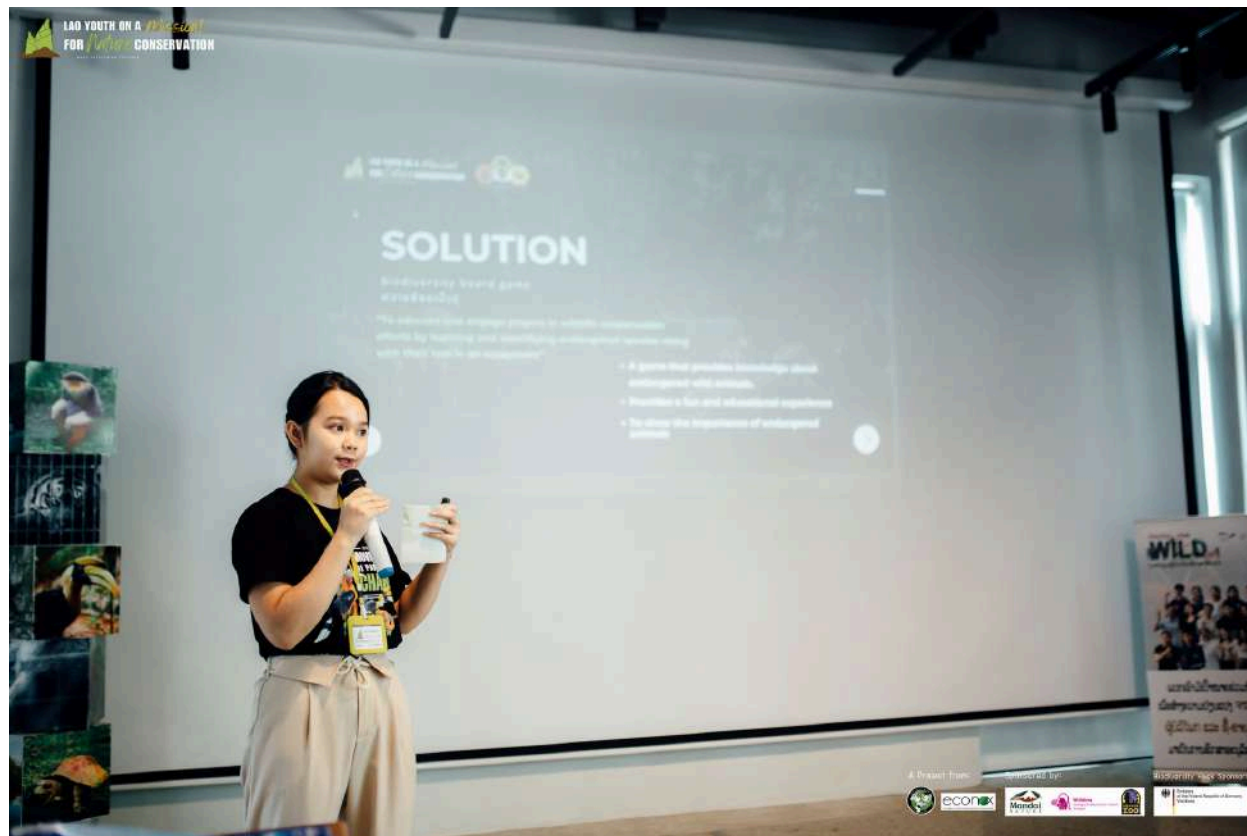


Partnership with:



# Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation

Project partner: econoX



# Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation

Project partner: econoX





# Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation

Project partner: econoX

Videos produced and published on our YouTube Channel presenting the program



Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation Cohort 2024



OVERVIEW OF 2-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM: Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation Cohort 2024



OVERVIEW OF THE VISIT TO LCTW: Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation Cohort 2024



OVERVIEW OF BIODIVERSITY HACKATHON: Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation Cohort 2024

# Studentships to Lao Nationals for environmental studies

At Association Anoulak, we prioritize selecting team members based on their **motivation and commitment to conservation**. Over the past few years, many of our team members have surpassed our expectations, taking on their roles with exceptional dedication and responsibility. Recognizing their potential, **we have made it a priority to support their growth** by **offering annual scholarships to pursue academic studies in nature conservation**.

**This initiative aims to nurture a new generation of skilled and passionate Lao professionals in the field of biodiversity conservation.**

**In 2024, Association Anoulak awarded scholarships to three exceptional team members to support their academic journeys and empower them for future careers in conservation.**

Mr. Ouphakhone Souvandee and Ms. Laythong Sythongbay are pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Forestry at the National University of Laos, where they have consistently demonstrated diligence and dedication.

Meanwhile, Ms. Keomany Leuangthi has been awarded a Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship for the Bachelor Program in Wildlife Management Engineering from the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Science in Hungary. While the scholarship she received covers accommodation and tuition fees, Association Anoulak is proud to provide additional financial support for her living expenses.



From right to left: Mr. Ouphakhone Souvandee; Ms. Laythong S both enrolled since 2024 in a Bachelor's degree at the National University of Laos; Camille, founder and director of Association Anoulak; Ms. Lampheuy Community program project manager



Ms. Keomany has been studying in Hungary since September 2024 for the Bachelor Program in Wildlife Management Engineering

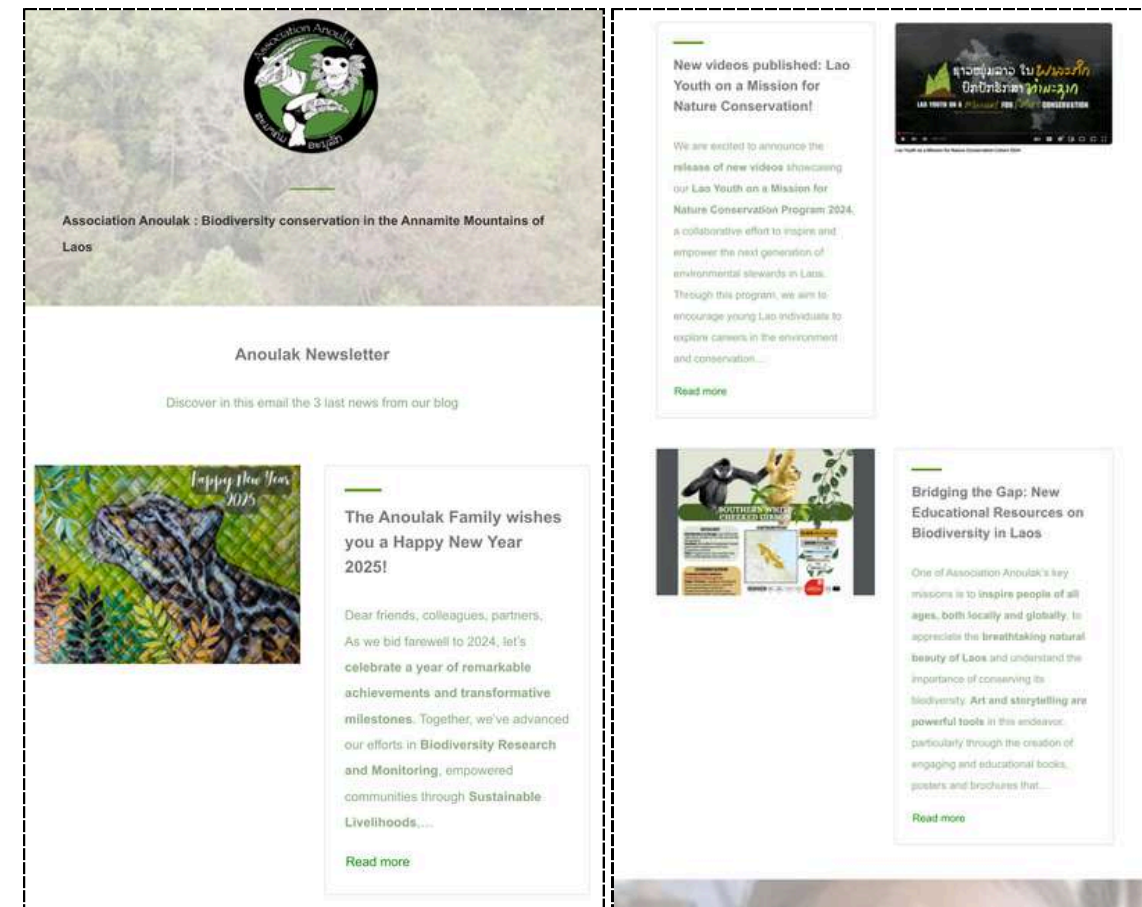
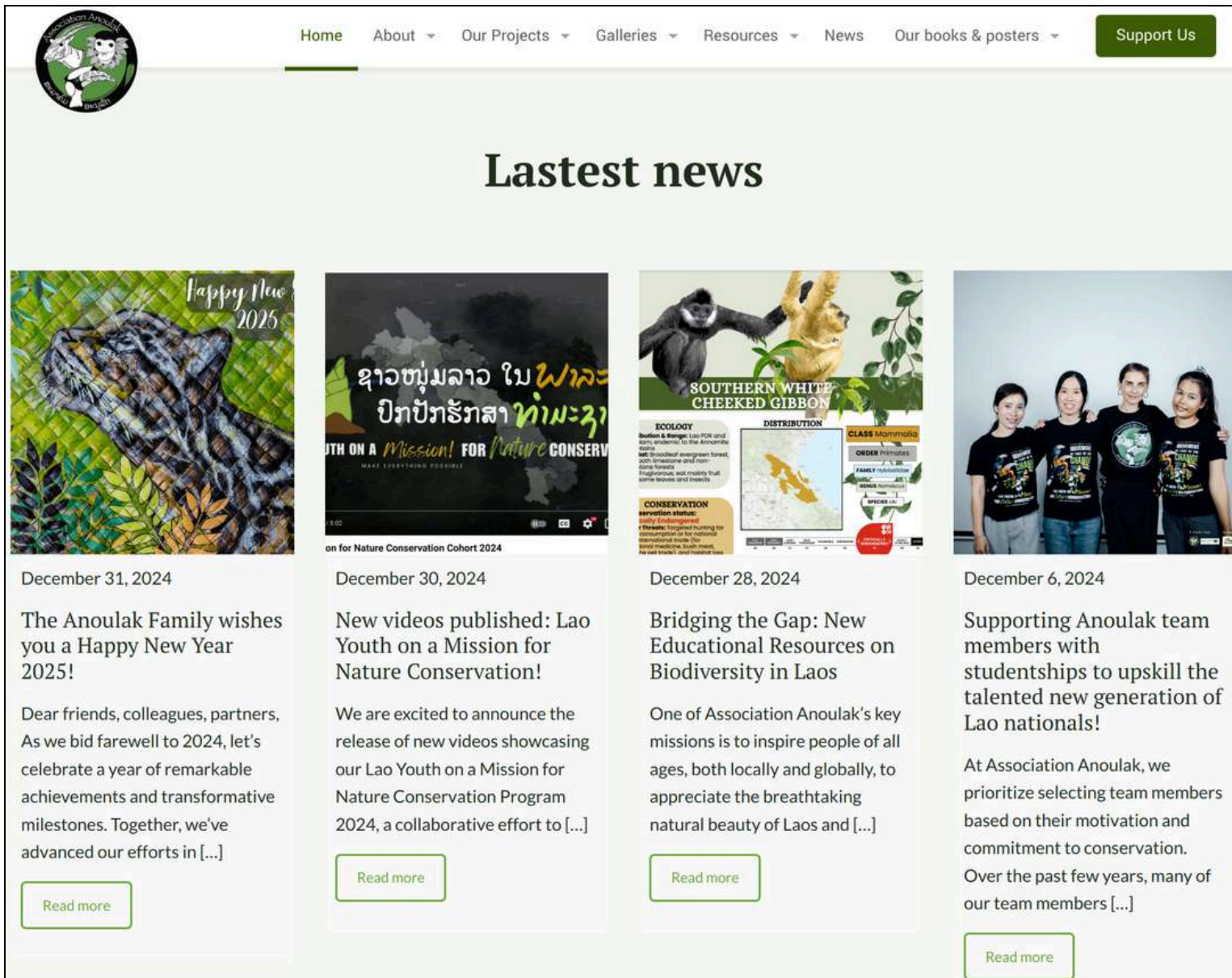
# Communication and publications in 2024



# On our Website and Email Subscribers List

Number of Blogposts  
in 2024 =  
**18**

Number of  
Anoulak Newsletters sent  
in 2024 =  
**6**



# Peer-reviewed Publications in 2024

Alexiou, I., Coudrat, C.N.Z., Niedballa, J., Wilting, A. and Tilker, A. 2024. Multi-species occupancy modeling of ground-dwelling mammals in central Laos: a case study for monitoring in tropical forests. *Wildlife Biology* e01261.



The image shows the front cover of the journal *Wildlife Biology*. The title is in large white letters on an orange background. Below the title, it says "Research article" and the full title of the paper: "Multi-species occupancy modeling of ground-dwelling mammals in central Laos: a case study for monitoring in tropical forests". The authors are listed as Ioannis Alexiou, Camille N. Z. Coudrat, Jürgen Niedballa, Andreas Wilting, and Andrew Tilker. There are ORCID icons next to each name. The journal logo (NSO) is in the bottom left corner. The page number "Page 1 of 9" is in the bottom right corner.

**Wildlife Biology**  
2024: e01261  
doi: 10.1002/wlb3.01261

Subject Editor:  
Shyamala Ratnayake  
Editor-in-Chief: Ilic Svanth  
Accepted 27 May 2024

Unustainable hunting and habitat loss have led to widespread mammal population declines in Southeast Asia, and evidence-based conservation is needed to prevent further declines. Robust monitoring of population trends is a key component of evidence-based approaches. We conducted a landscape-scale systematic camera-trapping survey in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park, located within the Annamites region in Laos, with the objective of establishing a population baseline that can be used for long-term monitoring for ground-dwelling mammals. We analyzed camera-trapping data within a multi-species Royle–Nichols occupancy framework to estimate occupancy and species richness within three management zones. We used anthropogenic and ecological covariates to understand the factors influencing species occurrence in the study site. In total, we detected 60 terrestrial mammals over 20 794 camera-trap days, including five Annamite endemics and 18 threatened species, of which 26 had sufficient detections to be included in the multi-species occupancy analysis. We found that overall species richness increased with remoteness and elevation. Mean  $\pm$  SD predicted species richness in the three management zones was 14.6  $\pm$  1.55 (Zone 1: Thong Khacheng), 13.19  $\pm$  1.64 (Zone 2: Thong Kouang), 11.84  $\pm$  1.15 (Zone 3: Nam Chae), with an average of 13.26  $\pm$  2.03. Our study 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 and multi-species occupancy modeling approaches to establish robust baselines for the monitoring of mammal communities in tropical protected areas.

**Keywords:** Annamites, baseline, camera-trapping, protected area, Southeast Asia

**Introduction**

The tropical forests of mainland Southeast Asia are among the most biodiverse and threatened forest systems globally (Myers et al. 2000; Wilcove et al. 2013). In Southeast Asia, rapid rates of forest conversion (Sodhi et al. 2010), combined with

© 2024 The Author. *Wildlife Biology* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of Niodic Society Okinawa  
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Page 1 of 9

# Meetings, conferences and events in 2024



# Meetings, Conferences and Events

On the **12th of February 2024**, we convened all Association Anoulak's **government partners from central, provincial, district, and village levels** to present the **achievements** of Association Anoulak's programs in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park of **year 2023**



On the **28th May 2024**, we convened at the **National University of Laos** to report on the different **projects implemented in collaboration with professors and experts from the university** and discuss future collaborations in the coming years.



# Meetings, Conferences and Events

On the **5th March 2024**, we presented to the **Denver Zoo**. Providing insights into our work to international donors is critical to narrowing the gap between donors from the zoo community and conservation practitioners. Denver Zoo has been one of our donor partners since 2023.



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On the **14th March 2024**, we were invited to present our work on muntjac species to the **IUCN SSC Deer Specialist Group Large-antlered Muntjac Working Group**.

Watch the recorded presentation [here](#):

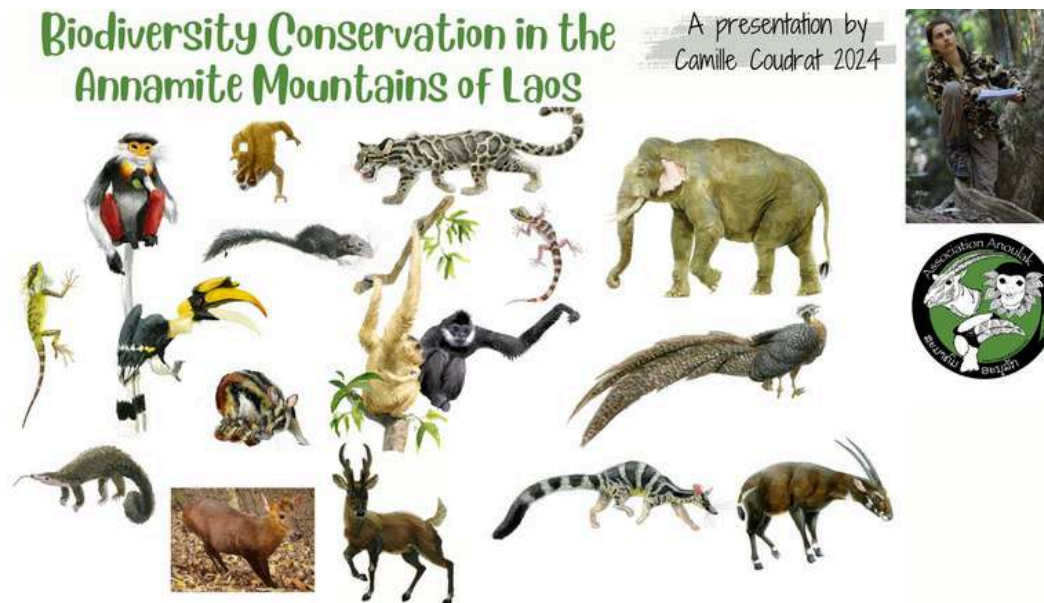




# Meetings, Conferences and Events

On the **8th April 2024**, we were invited to present to bachelor students enrolled in a **Conservation Biogeography Module** taught by **Dr. Prof. Gretchen Coffman** at the **National University of Singapore**.

Watch the recorded presentation [here](#):

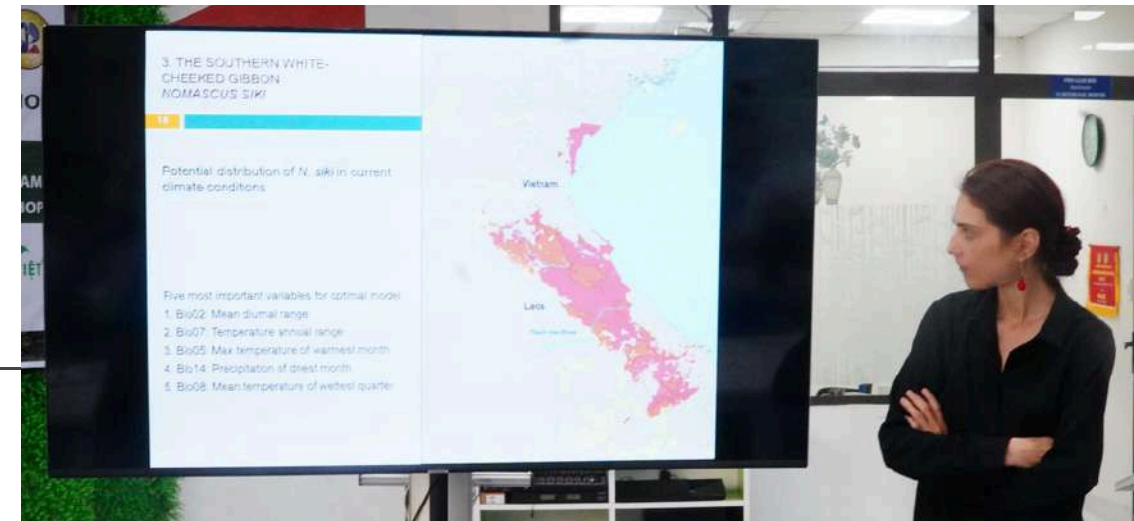


From **February to April 2024**, Camille the founder and director of Association Anoulak was nominated to enrol in a 12-week course in the **Conservation Standards for the Practice of Conservation** delivered by **Alcedo Conservation** and supported by **Conservation Connect**. This training led to a new collaboration between Association Anoulak and Alcedo Conservation to bring a course to Laos in 2025 tailored to Lao conservation practitioners (stay tuned!)



# Meetings, Conferences and Events

On the **13-14 June 2024**, we were invited to participate in the **workshop Developing capacity and informing priorities for ape conservation under climate change in Vietnam: Dissemination, implementation and training workshop II**. This workshop was organized by the **Central Institute for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES)** of **Vietnam National University** in collaboration with the **American Museum of Natural History (AMNH)**. The workshop was held at **Da Nang University**, in Da Nang, Vietnam.



In **September 2024**, Camille the founder and director of Association Anoulak was **interviewed for the French TV** to talk about the work of Association Anoulak in Laos.

**Watch the interview (all in French) [below](#):**

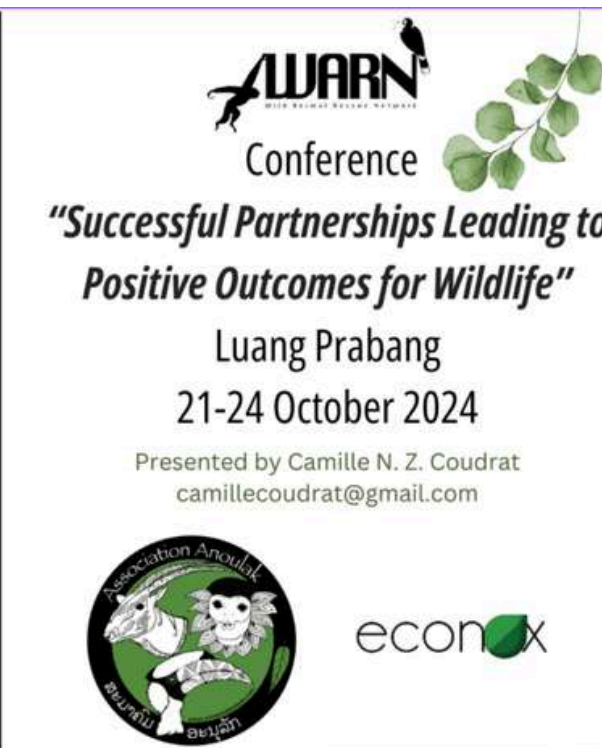


# Meetings, Conferences and Events

From **21 to 24 October 2024**, we were invited to attend and present at the **Wildlife Animal Network Asia Conference 2024** in Luang Prabang, Laos. Over 60 participants from 15 countries and territories and 30 organizations working to protect wildlife in Asia gathered for the conference. The theme of this conference was **“Successful Partnerships Leading To Positive Outcomes For Wildlife”**. This annual conference was a great opportunity to connect and network with fellow wildlife protectors in the region.



Watch the presentation [here](#):



# Meetings, Conferences and Events

From **10 to 14th November 2024**, we were invited to attend a workshop organized by the **Elephant Conservation Center** in Sayaboury Province, Laos to discuss and help shape a study abroad curriculum at the Elephant Conservation Center as part of their ECore (Education, COnservation and REsearch) program.



From **18 to 20th November 2024**, we were invited to attend and present at the **Scientific and Strategic Steering Committee (CPSS) of the French Research Institute ((IRD) regional program** to help inform IRD's country strategy for Laos and its broader Asia regional strategy, with a focus on ecosystem sustainability and One Health initiatives.



# Meetings, Conferences and Events

In **2024**, **Camille Coudrat** was honored to be selected as one of **15 women working in nature conservation in Southeast Asia**. This 8-month **Women in Conservation Leadership Program** is organized and delivered by the **IUCN SSC Asian Species Action Partnership (ASAP)** and **Visibility Co.** Through the programme the participating women will develop more effective leadership, gain confidence and build practical skills to increase their influence, communication and positive mindset.

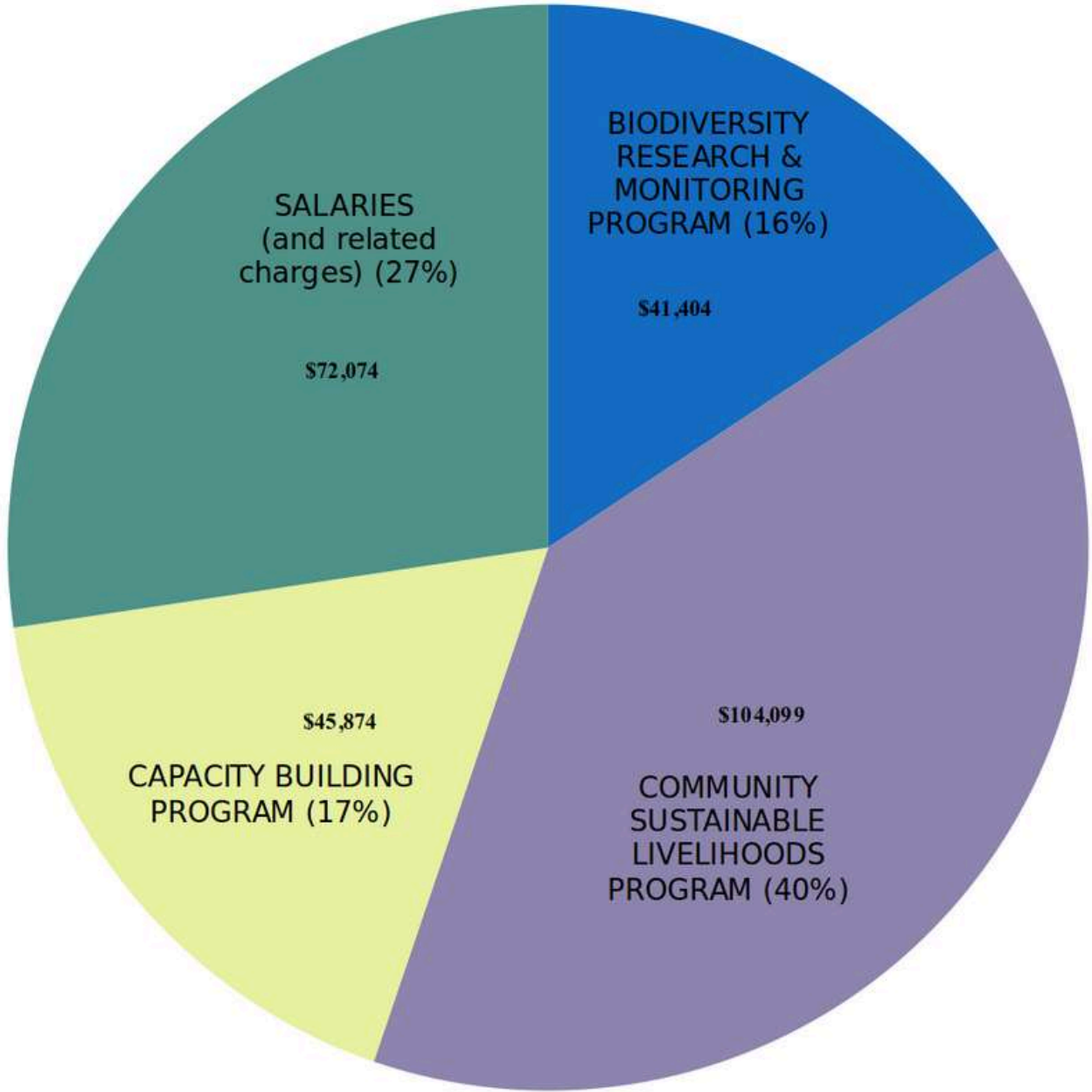




## Financial report for 2024

# Expenses in 2024

Category	Total (USD)
<b>Biodiversity Research and Monitoring PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$41,404</b>
<b>Community Alternative Livelihoods PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$104,099</b>
<b>Capacity Building PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$45,874</b>
<b>Staff Salaries (+ related charges: private insurance, taxes)</b>	<b>\$72,074</b>
<b>Total*</b>	<b><u>\$263,451</u></b>



*\*some administrative costs in France are yet to be included*



## Workplan for 2024



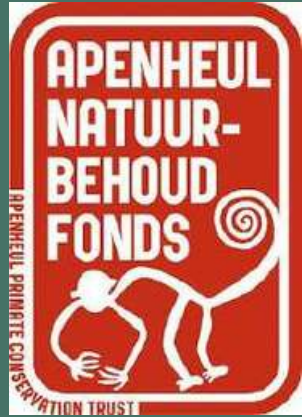
# Work Plan 2025 (tentative)

Association Anoulak	2025											
Project/Program	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>Biodiversity research and monitoring in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park</b>												
1) Elephant survey research:												
- Finalizing genotyping and modelling data analysis												
- reporting and dissemination												
- Publication in peer-reviewed journal												
2) Publications on previous projects												
<b>Community Sustainable Livelihood Program in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park</b>												
3) Program activities implementation:												
- <i>Objective 1</i> : Development and implementation of bottom-up Non-Timber Forest Products Production Groups												
- <i>Objective 2</i> : Natural Resources Management Plan for sustainable sourcing and use (will include village-level resource management plans, botanical research, social science research)							Project closure					
<b>Capacity Building in Laos</b>												
4) Lao Youth on a Mission for Nature Conservation - 2-week Training Program												
5) Conservation Standards for Lao conservation practitioners - 3-week Training Program							Dates to be determined					
6) Studentships to Lao Students (already on-going with 3 students) - ACADEMIC YEAR 2025												
7) One Scholarship for English Lessons (to selected Lao student) - ACADEMIC YEAR 2025												
<b>Communication, Dissemination</b>												
8) Attend the International Congress for Conservation Biology 2025 (15-19 June 2025, Brisbane, Australia)												



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# THANK YOU TO OUR PROJECT PARTNERS IN 2024



**Leibniz Institute for Zoo  
and Wildlife Research**

IN THE FORSCHUNGSVERBUND BERLIN E.V.



**University of  
St Andrews**



**Project technical  
partner:**





## New Year's Greetings

Happy New Year  
2025



Smile

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