

shared success stories on the theme of #OceanOptimism, and Mike Barry from UK retailer Marks & Spencer gave an unfamiliar perspective from business.

For this young conservationist, a highlight was the insightful evening lecture from Tom Brooks, IUCN, Switzerland, entitled simply Does conservation work? The answer was a robust and resounding yes, we simply need more of it: heartening words from someone at the centre of global conservation efforts.

A series of workshops (a feature that sets SCCS apart from many conferences) gave delegates a chance to experience primers on broad topics such as statistics, genetics and experimental design or hear from experts such as *Oryx*'s editor Martin Fisher, and Bill Sutherland, who leads Conservation Evidence. The body of the conference consisted of 32 talks from students who had come from as far afield as Iran, Madagascar and Cambodia (and as close as Cambridge). Most other delegates brought posters, which generated engaging discussion during the coffee breaks and lunch sessions.

Attending conferences, presenting research, and networking are important parts of our development as scientists. But SCCS goes further, providing an opportunity for early-career conservationists to immerse themselves among like-minded people from all around the world—an opportunity not to miss.

The next Cambridge SCCS will take place during 28–30 March 2017. Updates will be posted on the conference website (<http://www.sccs-cam.org>). There are now sister SCCS series in Australia, China, Hungary, India and the USA. Dates and application details are on the SCCS Cambridge website, <http://www.sccs-cam.org>.

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### 17th International Conservation Workshop for Arabia's Biodiversity

The 17th Annual International Conservation Workshop for Arabia's Biodiversity was held at the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, on 8–11 February 2016. This regional forum brought together over 150 participants representing UAE, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, Qatar and Iraq, as well as from the UK, USA, South Africa, Italy and New Zealand. The Sharjah workshops are hosted by the Environment and Protected Areas Authority of the Government of Sharjah, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah.

The 17th Workshop had four themes. A species assessment theme conducted a review of the distribution and

conservation status of all mammals in the Arabian region. The protected areas and planning theme worked in conjunction with mammal assessments to compile an up-to-date register of all biodiversity of protected areas in the region, to facilitate an evaluation of current mammal protection and future needs. The veterinary theme looked at the issue of wild ungulate disease diagnosis and management, with an emphasis on tuberculosis, and was expanded to consider the complications associated with mass game capture and the use of short- and long-acting tranquilizers.

Two working groups conducted a regional Red List assessment of all species of terrestrial mammals in the Arabian region, the Arabian Peninsula and Syria and Iraq. Over 160 species were assessed. In association with this assessment, a comprehensive compilation of summary data on biodiversity in protected areas was completed. Over 150 protected areas were identified, and the boundaries of key areas were mapped to facilitate a gap analysis of current and future conservation needs for threatened mammal taxa. A third working group reviewed the status and distribution of the 22 species of marine mammals in the Arabian region, the first time this exercise has been carried out.

The lack of species-specific diagnostic tests for tuberculosis, diagnostic capacity in the region, and transparency make this a very difficult disease to control. This year there was a combined workshop session looking at threats to the mammals of the region, acknowledging that veterinarians and conservation managers are part of the One Health concept that looks at the interface between humans, animals and the environment, including the diseases threatening livestock, free-roaming wildlife, and humans.

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### The Whitley Awards 2016

The annual Whitley Awards Ceremony was held on 27 April 2016 at the Royal Geographical Society in London. The

flagship event of UK-based charity the Whitley Fund for Nature was hosted by wildlife presenter Kate Humble, and saw seven conservation leaders from seven different countries receive Whitley Awards worth GBP 35,000 each in project funding over 1 year in support of their work.

In addition, the prestigious Whitley Gold Award worth GBP 50,000 was presented to 2011 Whitley Award winner Hotlin Ompusunggu of Borneo, Indonesia, for her efforts to conserve orang-utans and their habitat using innovative healthcare incentives. Over 450 people attended the event, where the charity's patron, HRH The Princess Royal, presented the Awards.

The 2016 Whitley Award Winners are Gilbert Baase Adum, Ghana (Saving Ghana's frogs: a giant leap forward for biodiversity conservation); Farwiza Farhan, Indonesia (Citizen lawsuits: defending local livelihoods and Sumatra's iconic species in the Leuser Ecosystem); Makala Jasper, Tanzania (Forest stewardship: community conservation of coastal forests in the greater Selous Ecosystem); Karau Kuna, Papua New Guinea (Tree kangaroos as a flagship to protect Papua New Guinea's spectacular wildlife); Muhammad Ali Nawaz, Pakistan (Snow leopard conservation: a landscape-level approach in the mountains of northern Pakistan); Alexander Rukhaia, Georgia (Magnificent migrants: safeguarding birds of prey negotiating the Batumi Flyway); Juliette Veloso, Madagascar (Saving the Critically Endangered side-necked turtle and its freshwater habitat).

For more information on the Whitley Fund for Nature, the Whitley Awards and to view short films about each of the winning projects, see [www.whitleyaward.org](http://www.whitleyaward.org). See p. XXX for the call for applications for the 2017 Whitley Awards.

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### **Conservation Leadership Programme 2016 Team Awards announced**

In early April the Conservation Leadership Programme announced the winners of its 2016 Team Awards, which will

provide crucial support for 18 teams of early-career conservationists undertaking high-priority projects on globally threatened species. The award winners will benefit from project funding worth a combined total of USD 262,650, participation by one team member in the Programme's renowned international training course, long-term mentoring from experts within the conservation sector and inclusion in a global network of Programme alumni. The network provides award winners with access to travel grants, learning resources, tools and collective experience—facilitated through peer-to-peer support—that is invaluable in helping winners to carry out research and implement conservation projects in demanding environments and to develop professionally.

This year's winning projects include several that focus on Critically Endangered and relatively neglected species, such as the painted batagur, Baer's pochard, vultures in India, and endemic amphibians in Mexico and China. Other threatened species and habitats that will benefit from research and practical conservation action include marine mammals in Malaysia, wetland-dependent flora in South Africa, the wildlife of Angola's national parks, avian hotspots in India, and migratory raptors in Georgia.

Generous support from the Arcadia Fund has enabled the Programme to provide two additional Future Conservationist Awards specifically allocated to teams undertaking marine conservation projects. One of these teams will conduct the first surveys of mesophotic coral ecosystems in a crucial Mexican section of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef. The other will monitor and contribute to conservation strategies for the elusive and increasingly threatened dugong in Quirimbas National Park, a remote haven of biodiversity in northern Mozambique.

To view a full list of funded projects visit [www.conservation-leadershipprogramme.org/our-projects/latest-projects-2016/](http://www.conservation-leadershipprogramme.org/our-projects/latest-projects-2016/)

CLP was initiated in 1985 and is a partnership between BirdLife International, Fauna & Flora International and the Wildlife Conservation Society. See p. XXX for the call for applications for the 2017 awards.

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