transects, with three surveyors, in the two protected areas in Pelabuhan Ratu (Tangkuban Perahu and Sukawayana Nature Reserves) and one unprotected area next to Gunung Halimun Salak National Park, covering an area from lowland to submontane forest over altitudes of 0–900 m. We were unable, however, to locate the species. Given this information, it seems that the species should be recategorized as Critically Endangered.

The two mature trees of *C. kipella* in Bogor Botanic Gardens produce flowers and seeds but these do not germinate. Germination tests conducted with 200 seeds have been unsuccessful. Examination of an additional 200 seeds revealed that only 2.5% contain a fully-developed kernel. Further research on reproduction biology is needed to support the propagation and conservation of this tree species. We are planning to propagate the tree using shoot cuttings as an alternative solution to produce new individuals for ex situ collections and reintroduction and restoration in the species' natural habitat.

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Taruka *Hippocamelus antisensis* continues to recover near La Paz, Bolivia

During a motorcycle ride on 5 March 2022, at 7.15, one of us (CEAC) sighted a deer, and was able to film it using a mobile phone. This allowed us to identify the individual as a male taruka *Hippocamelus antisensis*. The deer seemed to be alone, and fled after being filmed.

The taruka, which occurs above altitudes of 2,000 m in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru, is categorized as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. The species was believed to have gone extinct in La Paz valley by the end of 1980s, but was resighted as close as 8.5 km from the southern border of La Paz city c. 15 years ago (Rechberger et al., 2014, *Oryx*, 48, 445–450). In 2016, a lone male was sighted on a golf course c. 3.5 km from the city (E. Galdo, pers. comm.). Our new observation of the species was only c. 250 m from a recently urbanized area near the highly populated neighbourhood of Achumani, on the north-west border of the city at c. 3,800 m, and as far as we are aware is the most recent confirmed sighting of a taruka in the vicinity of La Paz city.

Although we have not rigorously monitored the advance of this population, the fact that a species formerly believed extinct within La Paz valley has been sighted so close to the city suggests that the species is recovering locally. In many places the taruka's principal habitat is not well protected; e.g. in northern Chile (Mata et al., 2019, *Oryx*, 53, 752–756). As the protected areas in La Paz are relatively small, we believe the population in La Paz valley may be recovering as a result of the absence of conflicts with people and the almost complete absence of sport hunting. The taruka is a charismatic species, and we therefore intend to approach La Paz city authorities to secure their support in using the taruka as a flagship species for local biodiversity conservation and education programmes.

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Partnership for conserving the Sub-Himalayan grasslands of India

The Sub-Himalayan tall grasslands support a host of wildlife, but are now found only in protected areas. These grassland ecosystems are declining as a result of conversion to woodland. These successional dynamics are governed by a number of drivers, including grassland burning in the dry season, meandering of rivers, erosion and silt deposition, soil hydrological processes, grazing regimes, invasive alien plant species and climate change.

Manas National Park in Assam, north-east India is one of the largest grassland protected areas in India. The Manas landscape underwent civil unrest during 1989–2003, interrupting the grassland management system previously in place. This absence of grassland management resulted in significant habitat degradation, potentially affecting several grassland specialist species, including the pygmy hog *Porcula salvania*, hispid hare *Caprolagus hispidus* and Bengal florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*.

To address this critical issue, the National Park management and NGOs began working together in 2017, and a partnership to conserve the critical grassland habitats of Manas National Park was formally launched in November 2021. The conservation partners are jointly carrying out interventions using a common framework that includes mapping of invasive alien plants, especially *Chromolaena odorata* (native to the Americas), removal of invasive plant species, engaging the local community in restoration, knowledge dissemination and sharing of restoration experience with conservationists

working in the Sub-Himalayan grasslands of Nepal and Bhutan.

As part of this partnership, the National Park authority has adopted a Grassland Management Action Plan. The Plan was finalized in November 2021 and all the major action points have been incorported in the National Park's working plans, including the Tiger Conservation Plan. Thus, the broader grassland habitat restoration initiatives, which were initially started by conservation partners, have now been embedded by the Forest Department in their management process. This is a unique collaborative approach for the conservation of tall grassland and the model could be adopted for other protected areas in which habitat restoration is needed.

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Markhor *Capra falconeri* monitoring in Tajikistan shows population recovery

The markhor *Capra falconeri* is categorized as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and included in Appendix I of CITES but is a lucrative species in the international trophy hunting market (Broghammer et al., 2017, IUCN SSC & Caprinae Specialist Group Report). Trophy hunting is contentious, despite its role in conserving species and habitats and the benefits for rural communities when well-managed (Dickman et al., 2019, *Science*, 365, 874).

In this context, the Committee for Environmental Protection of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan asked the IUCN Caprinae Specialist Group to help improve monitoring protocols and develop a preliminary conservation strategy for mountain ungulates in Tajikistan. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in August 2021, and in October 2021 Caprinae Specialist Group experts visited southern Tajikistan for reconnaissance and to train local experts in monitoring techniques. In March 2022, the Caprinae Specialist Group delegation assisted the Committee for Environmental Protection in conducting surveys of the markhor. The Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, Department of Forest and Protected Areas, and rangers from markhor conservancies also participated.

Working simultaneously across 10 markhor conservancies, five teams completed the survey, covering c. 2,000 km², in 15 days. The Caprinae Specialist Group team noted the strong commitment of the administration, hunting conservancies and local communities to the conservation and sustainable use of the markhor and its habitat. The rangers, drawn from the local community, are well-equipped and trained for monitoring and protecting the markhor. The Committee for Environmental Protection and the conservancies share benefits with the local communities and have invested in infrastructure such as improving water catchments, education, libraries, health facilities, and sport camps. Analyses are ongoing, but it appears the markhor population is $>$ 5,000 individuals and has recovered well since the 1990s, when the population was $<$ 500.

The Caprinae Specialist Group team will make recommendations for improving markhor monitoring protocols and for conserving the markhor population of Tajikistan under an integrated conservation plan. This will encourage improved focus on socio-ecological research, better benefit sharing with stakeholders, and continued capacity enhancement of the relevant personnel. Depending on the findings, the current annual trophy quota of 15 large males may be reconsidered.

The survey results will be shared with CITES and other relevant stakeholders.

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The Whitley Awards 2022

The Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) have announced the six conservation leaders receiving the Whitley Awards 2022. After a 2-year hiatus because of COVID-19, the awards ceremony returned to the Royal Geographical Society for this flagship event of the UK-based charity. The ceremony was also broadcast online.