

Kate Stokes Memorial Trust 2023 Newsletter

Registered Charity No. 1119478

21 December 2023

Dear Friends,

It is encouraging to see ever-more interest in environmental issues, with the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (aka COP28) receiving more global media attention than previous conferences. Whilst every country grapples with the effects of climate change, environmental organisations continue to face extreme financial pressures. Throughout 17 successive years, the Kate Stokes Memorial Trust has funded 18 projects in 14 countries. We shall see if climate concerns are reflected in applications for future Kate Stokes

Memorial Awards.

Continuing instability in many countries is reflected in financial markets. The Trust's investments value has suffered somewhat in recent years, but our financial situation is robust and we have cash reserves to fund Awards in 2024 and 2025. Meanwhile, the trustees are considering ways of administering the Trust's investments in closer alignment with our desired environmental, social and governance outcomes.

We are delighted to welcome Olivia Couchman, Conservation Leadership

Programme (CLP) Executive Manager, to the Trust. Olivia's engagement reinforces our close association with CLP, bringing fresh views and energy to help ensure the Trust continues to engage with CLP Awardees.

It was with sadness that we learnt of the death of one of the Trust's original friends and donors. Irene Hesketh, together with her husband Colin who died a few years ago, supported the Trust continuously since its inception. Irene left the Trust a legacy in her will, for which we are extremely grateful.

Trustees

Sue & Antony Stokes,
Marianne Carter,
Andy Brock-Doyle
Stuart Paterson



Kate

2023 Kate Stokes Memorial Award Winner: 'Working with the community to save the goliath frog in Cameroon'

The goliath frog, the world's largest frog, is an Endangered species found along the fast-flowing rivers in forests and farmlands of south-west Cameroon. The Nlonako Wildlife Reserve is a hotspot for this cat-sized creature, where it plays a crucial ecosystem function by feeding on insects that can cause damage to crops. Unfortunately, despite being fully protected by law, these gigantic amphibians are poached by locals for consumption and sale in the local market.

To mitigate this threat, Cedrick Fogwan and his team initiated a

community-based conservation programme involving local fishermen, farmers, and hunters who were trained to report frog sightings. Following an awareness campaign, the community members were also trained to cultivate snails as an alternative to eating and selling frogs, which resulted in a reduction in cases of poaching.

Through the Kate Stokes Memorial Award project, the team aims to enhance community engagement by promoting collaborative monitoring of goliath frog nesting sites, improving locals' understanding of goliath frog conservation, and contin-

uing to work on monitoring existing and new livelihood opportunities. The ultimate goal is to make Mount Nlonako a threat-free home for the goliath frog through the effective involvement of the local communities.



Cedrick Fogwan holding a goliath frog

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Trust Annual Review

The Trust AGM and 2023 Award selection meeting were held in May at the offices of The Rufford Foundation in London, where our trustee Stuart Paterson works.

All five trustees were able to attend in person for the first time in several years, together with Olivia Couchman, Executive Manager of CLP. The group was joined, via a video link from Delhi, by Kanchana Weerakoon who was an Award winner in 2008 and 2013 with her teams in Sri Lanka. Kanchana was invited to join the trustees and Olivia to

review the applications for the 2023 Award. Kanchana's insights as a former Award winner and active conservationist were greatly appreciated.

Thirteen eligible applications were received, of which six were of a particularly high quality. The 2023 Award was made to Cedrick Fogwan and his team for their project 'Working with the Community to save the Goliath Frog in Cameroon'. Cedrick's introduction to the project is on the previous page. It is the first time that the

Award has been made to a team yet to complete its CLP Future Conservationist project. Unfortunately, that project has over-run and work on the team's Kate Stokes Memorial Award project will not now begin until 2024.

The 2022 Award to the 'School of Mahseers' project in Uttarakhand, India, has been extremely successful and encouraging, although it is not yet completed. See below for Saurabh's progress report.

2022 Project: Mahseer School to protect 'School of Mahseers': Nurturing a conservation ethic in children of Baagi village, Nayar River Valley, Uttarakhand, India

The project is helping to build an understanding of golden mahseer in villages where young people who often resort to illicit fishing practices. In the two target schools, over 100 children were involved in 11 classes within 'Mahseer Clubs'. After their initial training in conservation education methods, two teachers are now routinely conducting activities such as quiz and painting competitions which are included in the schools as a part of their extracurricular mandate.

Pre- and post-awareness assessment suggest significant increases in the knowledge of children about the importance of mahseer migration, their breeding behaviour and the need to conserve their critical habitats in the Nayar River. Over 80% of the children have discussed (at least once) with their parents about the importance of mahseer, and that these fish should not be caught in the breeding season.

Through the delivery of interactive learning exercises, activity sessions and river walks, both the 'Mahseer Clubs' and the 'Mahseer Pathshala' (an informal learning platform for children not attending school), we are strengthening a dedicated conservation movement and instilling a realization in young people on how a 'live fish is worth more than a dead one'.



Mahseer conservation talk conducted by an expert from Garhwal University