

A photograph of an elephant standing in a forest, partially obscured by a green overlay on the right side. The elephant is facing right, with its trunk and tusks visible. The background shows dense foliage and trees.

January 2023

Pan Verus Project



About Us

Sierra Leone is a wild place, and it's time we start noticing.

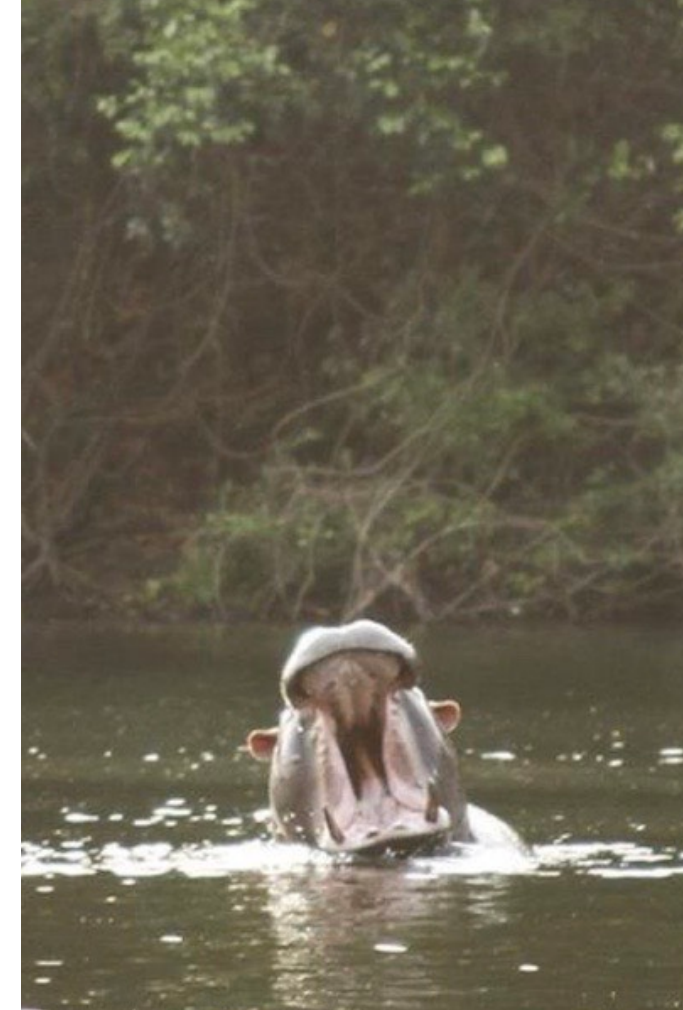
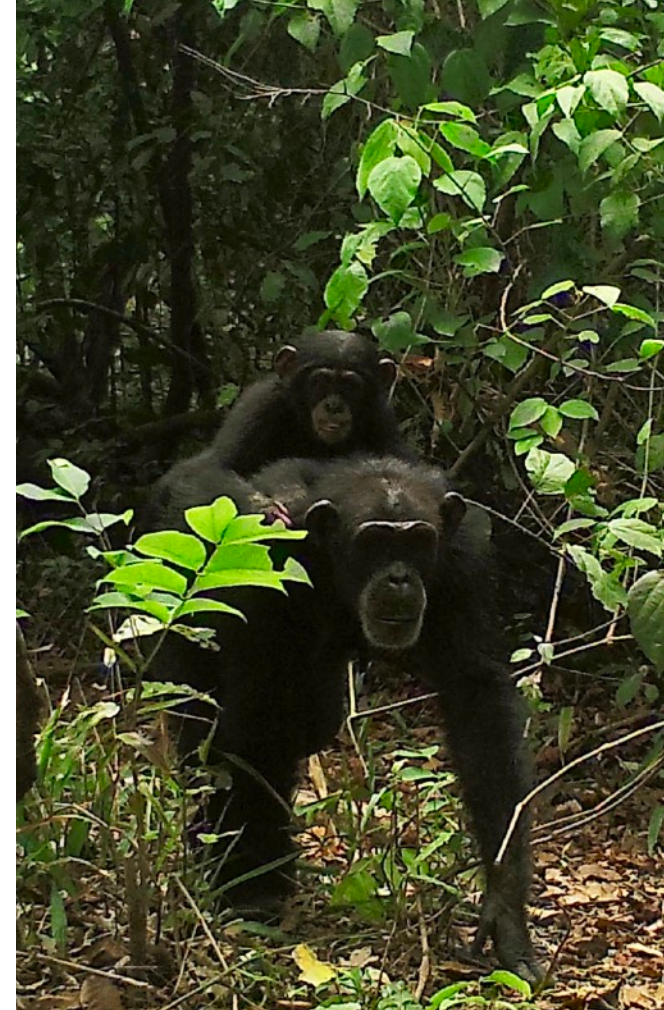
Sierra Leone is relatively unknown as a biodiversity hotspot. But Mama Salone boasts at least 16 species of primates, forest elephants, both pygmy and common hippopotamus, leopards, bongo, and much more. The Pan Verus Project is not a species-specific organization, but we are committed to promoting Sierra Leone's unique ecosystems and wildlife, as well as enabling Sierra Leoneans to step to the forefront of conservation action within their own country.

Outamba Kilimi National Park

Outamba Kilimi National Park is Sierra Leone's oldest and most biodiverse national park. This biodiversity is because the park sits in a habitat transition zone where the Upper Guinean Rainforest Ecosystem (a global biodiversity hotspot) begins its gradual change into a savanna landscape. Because of this, the park is home to a very unique mix of both rainforest and savanna species.

Outamba Kilimi National Park (OKNP) is Sierra Leone's oldest national park, but unfortunately, it is also the most understudied. It was also once home to the largest chimpanzee exporting scheme in Africa throughout the 1900's, and as a result, most chimpanzees in zoological facilities or laboratories around the world can trace their lineage back to Sierra Leone. At the site of the former hunting camp, now sits the OKNP Headquarters adjacent to Kortor Village, where much of PVP's work is based.

With so few wildlife studies having been conducted in OKNP since the Sierra Leonean Civil War (1991-2001), so much of what we learn about OKNP through PVP's camera trapping studies and surveys is novel information to researchers. We are working on multiple publications to expand species ranges, and are maintaining data collection on key species like elephants over a longer time frame than has ever been done in-country before.



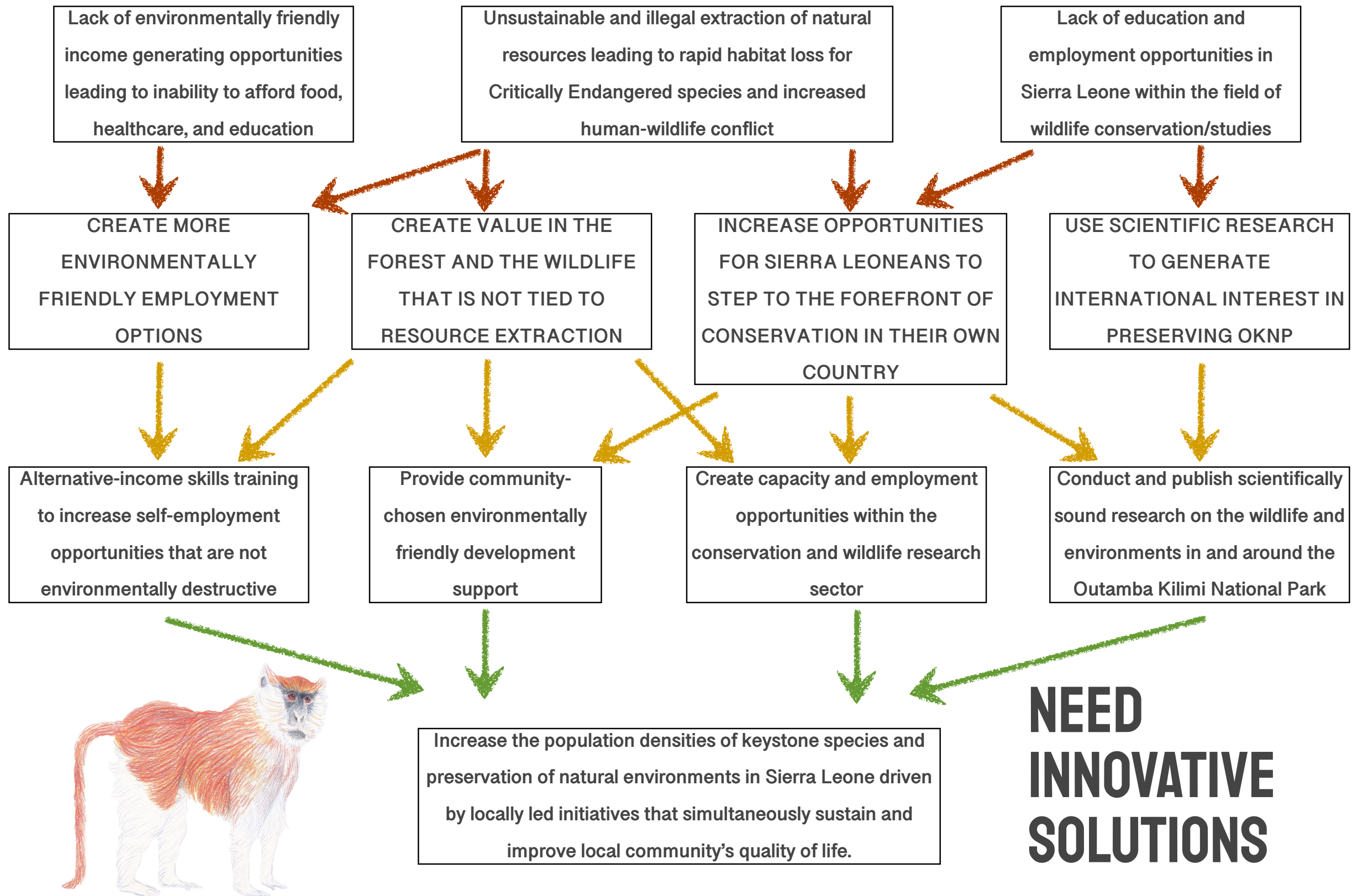


Sherbro Island

Sherbro Island, some 600km² and 150km from the capital, Freetown, is the country's largest island. It is steeped in pre-colonial history, with many buildings relics of its trading past. Today it is a quiet place with no cars and little economic activity, but with plans for a public private partnership to reinvigorate the economy, including wildlife tourism and habitat protection. It is this that PVP is looking to become engaged in, through community-based conservation.

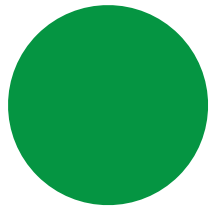
A first step is to validate the wildlife tourism potential, create land and boat trails and train guides. The main and smaller islands have extensive, mature mangrove which supports the largest roost and highest densities in the world of the Red List Endangered Timneh Parrot, validated by one of us. Other threatened wildlife of the archipelago includes African Manatee, several species of breeding sea-turtles and globally important concentrations of waterbirds including African Sinner. Tours to see these need careful planning, but can provide new livelihoods on the island and an economic rationale for habitat and species protection.

BIG ISSUES...

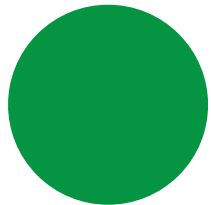


The Basics

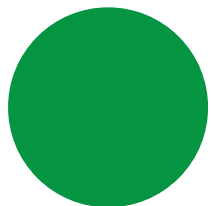
Our accomplishments so far...



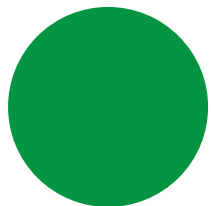
Created the Outamba Kilimi National Park Education Centre and Community Library in 2019 with support from the British Ecological Society



Continuous monitoring of local Forest Elephant group since 2020 and near continuous camera trapping in OKNP since 2019, cameras funded by Lion Recovery Fund



Built a vocational training centre in Kortor in 2021 and have since hosted free training in tailoring and sewing, hair dressing, traditional bee-keeping, basket weaving, and soap making



Supported two women's farming collectives through hyper-local micro-grants alongside the initiation of our agriculture programme funded by the Dallas Zoo in 2022



The Pan Verus Project was officially registered as a UK Charity at the end of 2020, but we have been around much longer than that.

The Pan Verus Project (PVP) began in 2018 with a team of international and multi-disciplinary researchers brought to Outamba Kilimi National Park by Dr Sarah Bell. A small, but dedicated, team spent three field seasons building relationships with local community members and gathering base-line data prior enacting any long-term wildlife research projects or sustainable community development initiatives.

As of 2021 all of our community development initiatives go through our locally registered Community Based Organization (CBO) branch. Because the majority of the CBO leaders must be Sierra Leonean, we felt this was the best way to ensure that our efforts would always be community approved and supported.

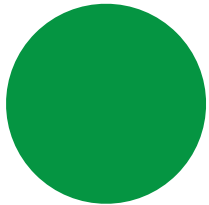


Children from the Kotor Primary School show off their certificates for completing a twelve week nature-school curriculum run in 2019

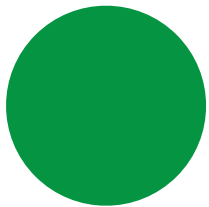
Our goal is to increase the population densities of keystone species and enable the preservation of natural environments in Sierra Leone driven through locally led initiatives that simultaneously sustain and improve local people's quality of life.

Reflecting

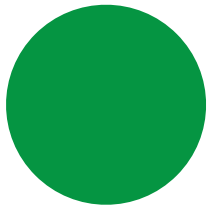
On our goals set for 2022



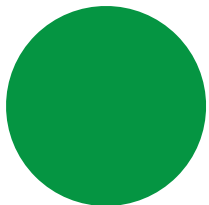
Continue to expand our alternative-income skills training programs



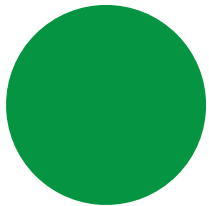
Expand camera trapping efforts while creating conservation jobs through training and hiring local monitors



Secure reliable funding to ensure all local team members are paid liveable and appropriate wages



Strengthen our ties with local partners through collaboration (CBO's, NGO's, Sierra Leonean Universities, local and regional community leaders and government officials)

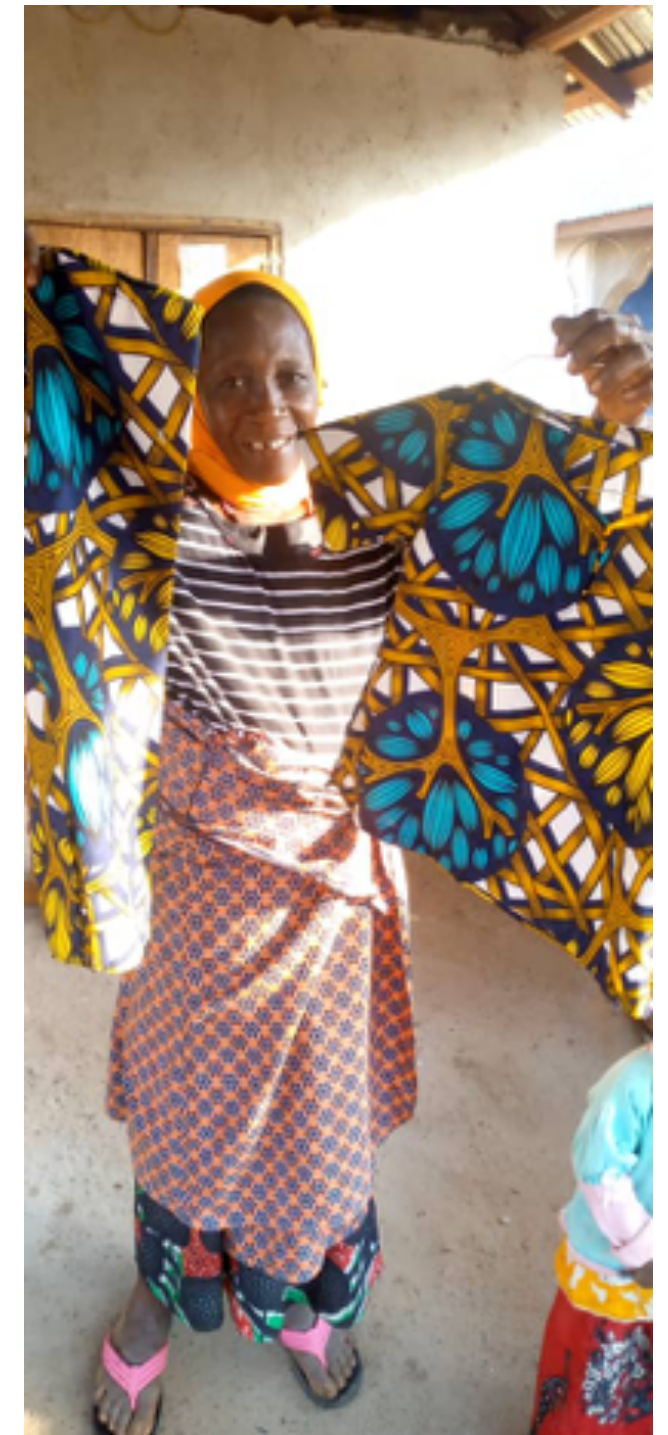


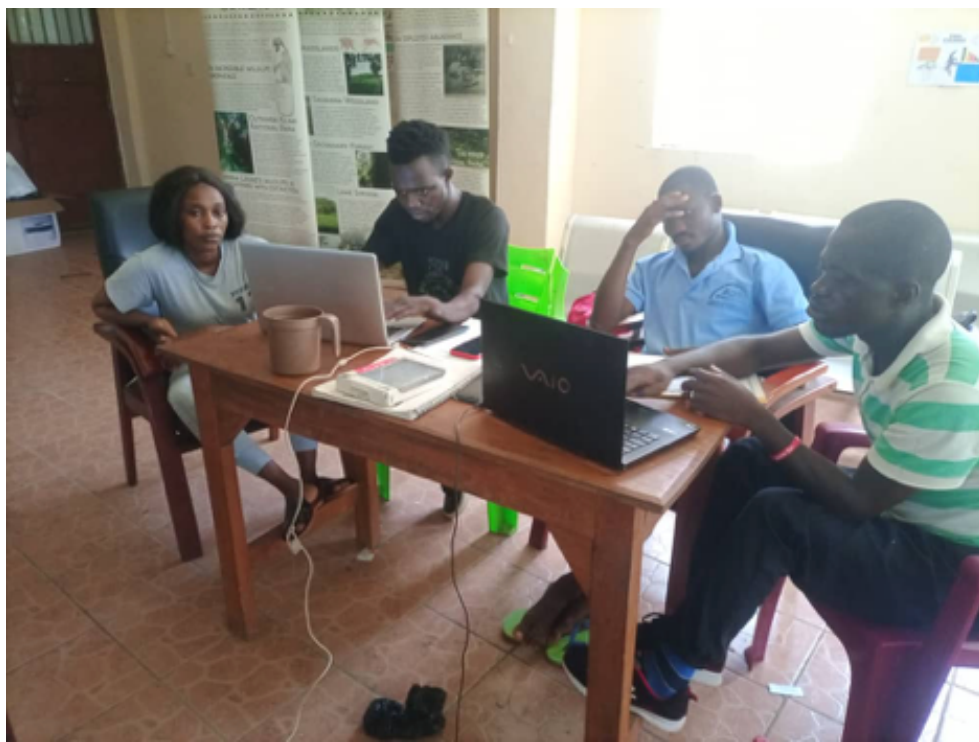
Investigate sustainable agriculture options that decrease human-wildlife conflict caused by wildlife damaging/consuming crops





Tailoring students started by learning to cut out patterns on old rice bags, and then moved on to using fabric donated by a family-run shop in Freetown. Today, more than a dozen women are competent enough to cut and sew from patterns, using high quality material creating garments which are fit-for-sale, providing much needed cash income for families which previously had few options outside of subsistence farming or illegal resource extraction.





Other classes include computer literacy skills and soap making. There was no one available locally to teach soap making on a long-term basis, so we partnered with a locally run group in the nearby city of Makeni, who travelled to stay with the project and train a woman to be the instructor.



We were excited to offer a seasonal training course which taught the local Susu method of traditional beehive making, using locally available materials like woven grass and buffalo dung insulation. We are hoping we can work with these new bee keepers to see if presence of hives on farm borders deters elephants.



We also offered hair dressing classes, which was requested by the community. We have been happy to see participants travel from other communities to participate in the training and return with new skills and opportunities for self-employment.



Thanks to funding from the Dallas Zoo, we were able to host a micro-grant program. We wanted to encourage people to submit their own ideas for community improvement. All eligible submissions were agriculture-based, and ultimately we chose women's farming groups who provided well thought out applications, and a clear outline of the use of funds as well as showed the ability for the micro-grant to impact the wider community.

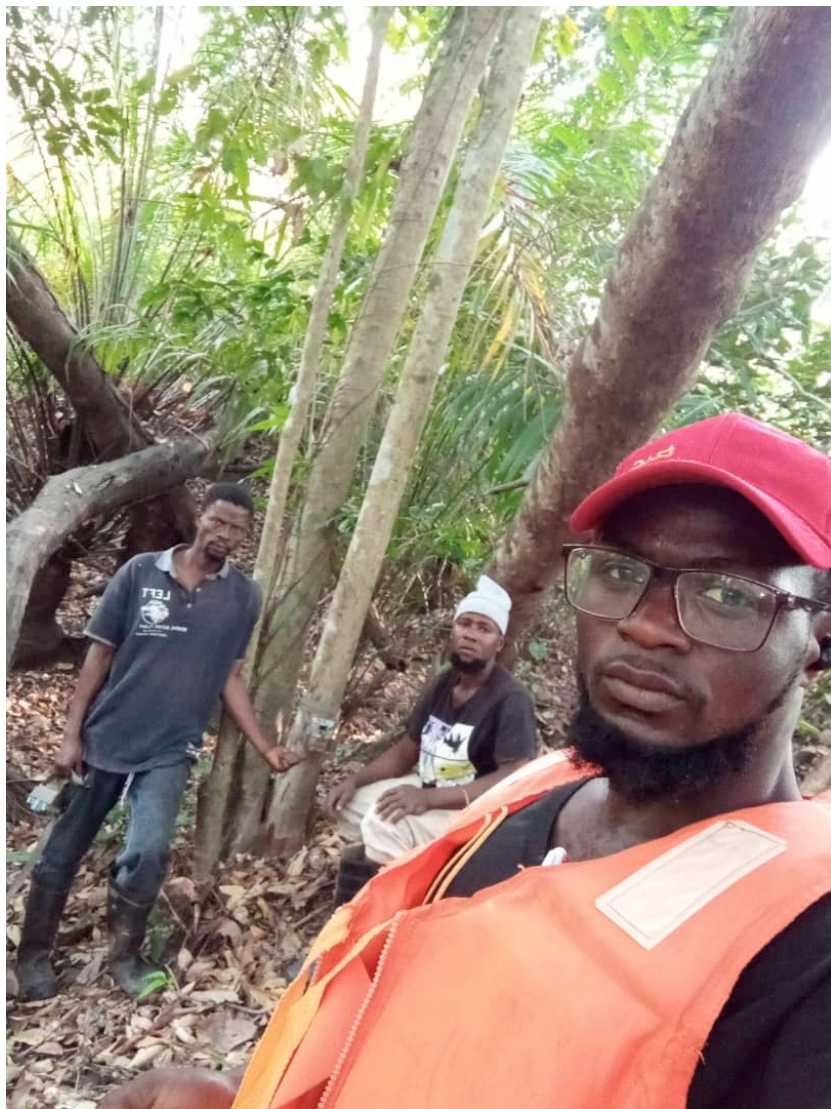




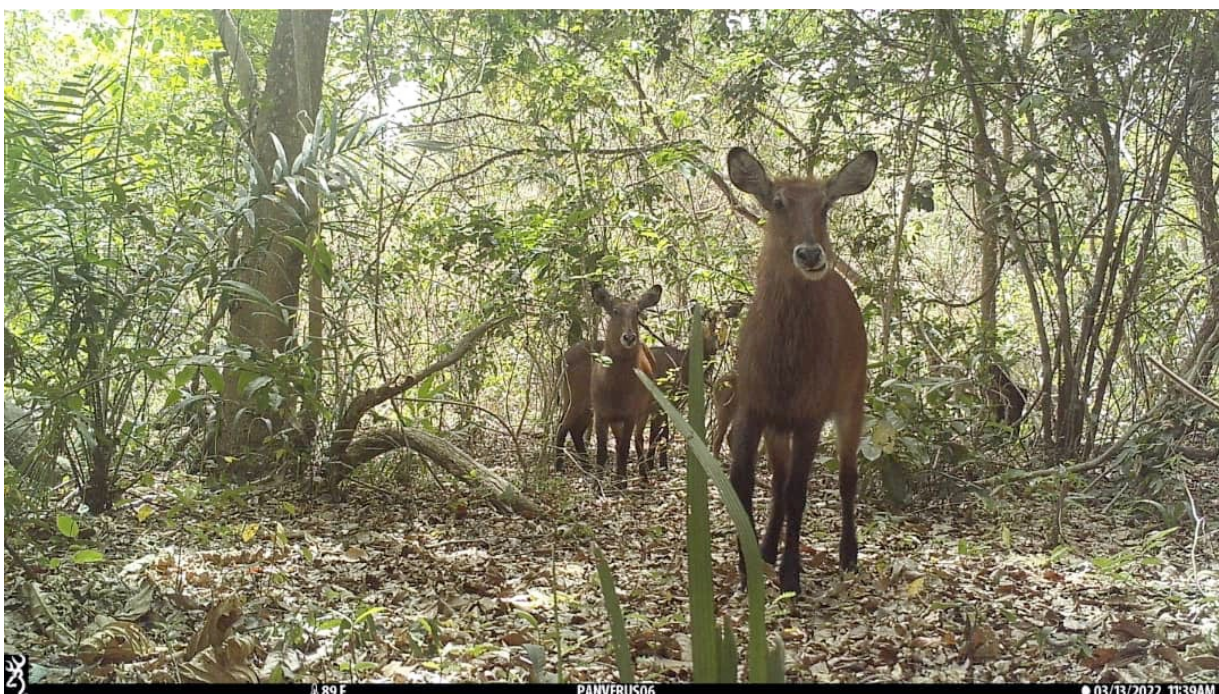
The tree nursery continues to grow well, with the late-stage additions of some hand woven pots made from local grass, which will biodegrade once planted. This is a trial based off of the Borneo Nature Foundation effort which employs weavers to create these biodegradable seed starters as part of their reforestation efforts.



The top right image portrays the team with PhD researcher Filipa Borges, who came for her first visit to the park to conduct research on human-wildlife relationships, particularly focused around primates. We are currently collaborating with Filipa and other graduate students to publish results of this work, co-authored with all relevant team members.

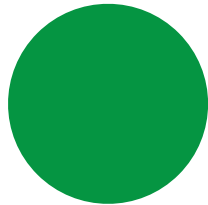


Camera trapping efforts continue! We trained new team members in 2022 as they stepped into their first conservation careers. We are excited to see the interest in wildlife grow locally, and are always trying to meet the needs of our team in terms of continuously up-skilling them, no matter what level they start at.

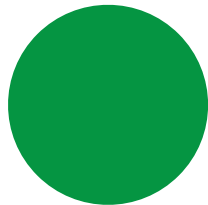


Looking Ahead

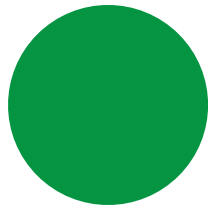
2023 Goals



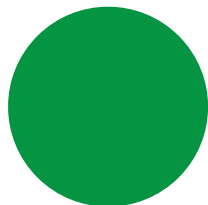
Updating our data collection methods which will also ensure less literate team members can collect accurate data that is stored in a form for data sharing with partners and researchers, as well as rapid report production



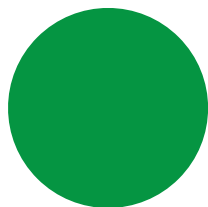
New initiatives to include education partnerships, delivering courses, supervising postgraduates and providing practical training in wildlife data collection



Vastly expand our camera trapping efforts and move on to the next stage of monitoring to assess populations



Maintain and expand our community-chosen alternative income projects



Expand into starting up and partnering with grassroots community run eco and wildlife tourism offerings across Sierra Leone



Smart-phone data collection

As our field data collection expands, a key component is accurate and efficient collection and storage of data for future use by PVP, other researchers and public bodies. For this, we have largely switched from paper forms to creating bespoke smartphone forms for each project. In common with the global wildlife data collection apps such as iNaturalist, these reduce error, assist data validation through linked photos or audio files and enable rapid, safe cloud storage in formats that remove data entry needs, save analysis time and ease data sharing.

Conservation Education

This year (2023) started off with PVP presenting at Project 1808's Annual Science and Leadership Festival. We hope to build on this to create a fruitful relationship between the two projects which we hope will include education opportunities at a new university in Kabala, as well as interdisciplinary research collaboration.

In addition to this, we are hoping to increase the frequency and scope of our community level conservation education outreach, which has included football games, documentary screenings, and we hope to re-start primary and secondary school visits.

Expanding Our Research

For the last several years we have maintained our camera traps as part of a presence/absence style survey to determine

what species are present in and around OKNP. Now that we have substantial data, including multiple species not previously known to the area, we will modify our camera trap data collection style so that we can begin to assess the populations and densities of key species.

We are also going to geographically expand our data collection. Since we have now had over a year of relationship building with communities around Kilimi, we are planning to be the first researchers to deploy cameras in this section of the park. We also hope to monitor the important wildlife corridor between the two sections of the park, which lead to the Kuru Hills Forest Reserve.

Alternative Income Training

We have successfully been running multiple community member-chosen alternative income training programmes from our building in Kortor community. In 2022 we tentatively expanded this and sent some sewing machines to a community several hours away, near Kilimi. This was so well received the community has been working (and funding themselves) since the start of dry season to build their own building to host this, and hopefully other, training programmes. We are planning to send a few machines to two additional communities, with our trainers visiting these areas on a regular basis.

A traditional art form in Sierra Leone, which has had widespread cultural impact is Gara Dyeing, which is what inspired the global trend of tie-dye. Community members have requested training in this, so that they can create their own patterned textiles unique to themselves.

Community Based Ecotourism

We have always strived to ensure we do not undertake any initiatives without the full support of the community people. For years there was not much interest in becoming involved with ecotourism, as there was a government run tourism centre at the park entrance. This has since fallen into disrepair and no longer usable.

Since the government run centre has been out of commission for the season, tourists have been finding lodging within Kortor Village. This has jumpstarted the interest in participating in ecotourism, and that it could be financially viable for them to participate in. We are hoping to build a community run guest house in the village, and the community has also requested an area for a craft market.

In addition to supporting the creation of infrastructure for tourists to come to see the wildlife and nature at Outamba Kilimi National Park, we are thinking bigger. We are currently exploring the option of



linking up community-based research and conservation initiatives with ecotourism at several key sites across the country. We hope to create several itineraries that would be of interest to different target groups including domestic and international tourists, for example: the potentially lucrative expat community, the growing Sierra Leonean middle class, and returning diaspora. This would expose ecotourists to

Threatened species for which Sierra Leone has key populations, as well as awe-inspiring wildlife spectacles.



Three, Five, & Ten Year Plans

Our work thus far has proven the value of persistence. Persistence through distrust, through pandemics, and through economic crises. The people living in around Outamba Kilimi National Park have been involved in many short-term projects that rarely took the longterm needs and desires of the actual people in the community into consideration.

This year we have had villages which had previously refused participation due to distrust, approach us asking for involvement in future opportunities. We have had communities change their stance on involvement in activities like ecotourism, coming to these decisions of their own volition. We have seen the young people of several villages come together to create a youth partnership programme. This progress has happened because of our continuous presence in the area, where we have strived to cultivate an environment where anyone in the community feels like they can present ideas to the project.

We anticipate continued success both in expanding our knowledge of the flora and fauna of Sierra Leone, but in engaging communities in successful and sustainable community-led conservation efforts.

Three Years From Now...

We will have helped more than 200 people gain skills that they can use for self employment, and given them access to the tools to minimise startup costs, reducing reliance on natural resource extraction for income.

We will have a clear understanding of the different elephant groups living in Northern Sierra Leone, and have individuals identified.

We will be leading in publications on wildlife and ecological research based in our areas of operation.

We will have supported the establishment of cross-country ecotourism opportunities and spurred local development of sustainable tourism infrastructure leading to more local employment opportunities in a variety of sectors.

We will be working with multiple higher education institutions, both in Sierra Leone and internationally, to ensure that there are multiple avenues for Sierra Leoneans to step to the forefront of conservation in their own country.

We will have several agroforestry style farms established, and be working with farmers across several chiefdoms to test non-destructive crop protection methods.

Five Years From Now...

We will have helped more than 500 people gain skills that they can use for self employment. We will have created jobs at all levels of conservation in both research and ecotourism. The combination of this will both place value on nature and wildlife in a natural state and decrease reliance on resource extraction for cash-in-hand income.

We will see an increase in elephant births and a decrease in total crop loss by elephants as they begin to use the forest corridors between farms that have been supported by our tree nurseries.

Sierra Leone will be on the map for ethical wildlife tourism, with tours being taken by both national and international visitors. It will install pride in Sierra Leone's environment on a national scale.

We will have a comprehensive understanding of the flora and fauna of Sierra Leone, with multiple papers published in international journals, ensuring opportunities for Sierra Leonean's to gain international clout from their work.

We will understand the methods of crop protection which work best for different species, and these will be instituted across participating communities resulting in increased food security, decreased human-wildlife conflict, and fewer retaliatory killings of threatened species.

Ten Years From Now...

We will be the leading evidence based conservation organisation in Sierra Leone, working with a range of partners. The Pan Verus Project will be Sierra Leonean led at all levels and will have attracted international attention for Sierra Leonean conservationists.

We will see clear economic improvement in the areas we have maintained alternative incoming training programmes reflected in higher literacy rates, higher rates of self-employment in both men and women, and increased access to amenities like electricity.

Sierra Leone will love and appreciate their forest elephant population. There will be a desire and consequently, action, from the local communities up to government officials to protect the elephant populations in the country.

We will have supported and fostered a love for other (smaller) Sierra Leonean species in both the general public and in the those developing their career in wildlife related activities. This will include awareness and cessation of certain conflict-driven activities that impact



other Endangered species like Chimpanzees, colobus species (*C. polykomos*, *P. badius*, *P. b. temminckii*), pangolin species (*P. tetradactyla*, *M. tricuspis*, *S. temminckii*) and more.

Sierra Leonean students with an interest in wildlife research and conservation action will have a variety of education and employment opportunities, available to those at all education levels.

Our wildlife-conflict free agroforestry farms will become a place for people

from across Sierra Leone, and wider West Africa, to come and learn about working with subsistence farmers in high-wildlife density areas to find solutions that work on all levels. We will offer training and education opportunities to share our lessons learned with the wider community.

We will have created a sustainable income to support our work through funding partnerships, as well as ethical eco-tourism.

Pan Verus Project

PayPal account: panverusproject@gmail.com
6 Quarry High St, Oxford, OX3 8JT

(Amounts in GBP)

Balance	Beginning	Ending
Total balance	1,049.70	8,272.04
Available balance	1,049.70	8,272.04
Payables balance	0.00	0.00

Activity	Debit	Credit
Sales activity	—	15,459.40
Payments received	0.00	15,459.40
Disbursements received	0.00	0.00
Refunds sent	0.00	0.00
Fees	-685.20	—
Payment fees	-685.20	0.00
Refunded fees	0.00	0.00
Chargeback fees	0.00	0.00
Dispute Fees	0.00	0.00
Bank Return Fees	0.00	0.00
Account fees invoice	0.00	0.00
Campaign fees	0.00	0.00
Other fees	0.00	0.00
Dispute activity	0.00	—
Chargebacks and disputes	0.00	0.00
Dispute reimbursements	0.00	0.00
Transfers and withdrawals	-7,416.36	—
Currency transfers	0.00	0.00
Transfers to PayPal account	0.00	50.00
Transfers from PayPal account	-7,466.36	0.00
Purchase activity	-135.50	—

Activity	Debit	Credit
Online payments sent	-135.50	0.00
Refunds received	0.00	0.00
Debit card purchases	0.00	0.00
Debit card returns	0.00	0.00
Reserves and releases	0.00	--
Reserve holds	0.00	0.00
Reserve releases	0.00	0.00
Payment review holds	0.00	0.00
Payment review releases	0.00	0.00
Payment holds	-4,793.21	0.00
Payment releases	0.00	4,793.21
Gift voucher purchases	0.00	0.00
Gift voucher redemption	0.00	0.00
Money not yet available	0.00	0.00
Money available	0.00	0.00
Blocked payments	0.00	0.00
Tax holds	0.00	0.00
Tax releases	0.00	0.00
Tax	0.00	--
Tax withholding	0.00	0.00
Other activity	--	0.00
Money market dividends	0.00	0.00
Debit card cashback	0.00	0.00
Credit card cashback	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00

Note: This is not an actual bill.