21 For 21 Initiative to Help Projects Suffering From a Covid Related Downturn in Income

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Media:

21 For 21 is a is a new initiative by UK based conservation charity Explorers Against Extinction.

The Norfolk-based charity aims to champion the work of twenty-one small conservation projects around the world throughout the course of 2021, while pledging to donate at least £2,100 in funds to each one.

The consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic have been catastrophic for communities reliant on ecotourism. Many biodiverse areas are feeling the strain, facing increased threat at the same time as a reduction in funding.

The future of a community-run marine turtle conservation group which relies on income from ecotourism to operate round-the-clock beach patrols hangs in the balance. Historically, nearly all the turtle eggs and even some female turtles at Rekawa beach in Sri Lanka have been taken. But by recruiting former poachers to patrol the beach and act as turtle guardians the project protected 765 turtle nests allowing around 70,000 hatchlings to reach the sea between May and August 2020.

The 20 strong community team who work in shifts to patrol the beach have cut their wages in half, to survive the downturn, receiving just $3 USD each per six-hour shift.

Funds raised by 21 For 21 will pay for 30 days of beach patrols. Supporters are also encouraged to visit Sri Lanka, when FCDO advice permits, through the charity's responsible travel network of small specialist operators. This in turn will support jobs both here in the UK and abroad.

In Uganda’s Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, home to endangered mountain gorillas, **21 For 21 will provide support for an organic farming programme at a time when the forest is under increased pressure.**

In June last year, the Uganda Wildlife Authority arrested four men when the body of a speared silverback gorilla, Rafiki was discovered in the forest. The men said they had been hunting for antelope when they came across the gorilla and it charged.

The programme which includes seeds, land, and advice, provides an alternative livelihood for indigenous people, alleviating pressure on the forests resources and empowering a marginalised community. By training local communities living around the gorilla habitat in sustainable organic farming, it enables them to feed their families and sell any surplus produce at local markets.

In Brazil, a project in the Pantanal working with the largest cat in the America's - the Jaguar - saw income from ecotourism dip from 40% to a crippling 10% in 2020. 21 For 21 funding will help to support a rewilding scheme which has successfully released both jaguars and puma back to the wild.

Trustee Sara White says: “During the pandemic I think many of us have appreciated that small things can make a really big difference - this is exactly the sentiment behind 21 For 21. This is a unique opportunity to connect with 21 projects across all seven continents, from Brazil to Borneo. By donating just £21 you can support them all.”

The charity is also running two dedicated fund-raising programmes to help them meet their Project Fund target of at least £44,100.

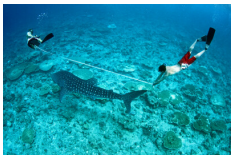
Supporters are invited to Get Creative for Conservation by donating artwork, images, or stories to a series of competitions. Finalists will be included in a touring exhibition this autumn with two weeks on London’s South Bank at Oxo Tower Wharf. The exhibition aims to celebrate the beauty and colour of the natural world while also highlighting the threat of human activity.

An online auction of selected pieces, with all proceeds to 21 For 21, will help to raise additional funds.

The charity is also offering places in a comprehensive programme of active sponsored challenges ranging from walks, run, climbs and cycles and including iconic events such as the Three Peaks and the Virgin Money London Marathon.

For full details and 21 For 21 Project Directory please visit

https://explorersagainstextinction.co.uk/21-for-21-project-directory/



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Scan Me:

Company Contact:

Explorers Against Extinction

T. 01692 218189
E. sara@realworldconservation.org.uk
W. https://explorersagainstextinction.co...

Additional Contact(s):
07801439693 (Sara Mobile)

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