

Let's Not Forget Mangroves This World Forest Day

Friday 21 March, 2025

This World Forest Day (21st March 2025), we wanted to remind people about mangrove forests, the often overlooked heroes of forest conservation.

Rainforests provide habitat for half of the earth's biodiversity and function as essential systems for sustaining life while controlling our planet's climate. Conserving these important ecosystems is essential to prevent biodiversity loss. However, mangroves are often forgotten when we talk about forests.

Mangroves are spectacular ecosystems located at the intersection of land and sea. They are the 'superheroes' of the shoreline ecosystem, which support rich biodiversity, providing valuable nursery habitat for fish and crustaceans and act as natural coastal defences against storm surges, tsunamis, rising sea levels, saltwater ingress and erosion. Mangrove ecosystems are highly effective carbon sinks, sequestering vast amounts of carbon, which play a crucial role in mitigating climate change.

IAR's partners in Indonesia, YIARI, have developed an effective community-driven mangrove restoration project that aims to protect this important marine ecosystem and safeguard coastal farming communities whose crops can be destroyed by saltwater ingress. When crops fail, people are forced to engage in more destructive practices like hunting or logging, which has a detrimental impact on wildlife and their forest habitats as well as their own prosperity and wellbeing.

Gavin Bruce, CEO of conservation charity International Animal Rescue, said: "It's about working with local communities in our efforts to generate long-term, sustainable methods to stop deforestation and preserve these essential ecosystems. By working together, we can both protect wildlife and empower communities while demonstrating how collective action produces real-world sustainable outcomes that benefit nature and people."

Mangroves are disappearing three to five times faster than overall global forest losses, with severe ecological and socio-economic impacts. Current estimates indicate that mangrove coverage has been halved in the past 40 years. According to UNESCO, some countries lost more than 40% of their mangroves between 1980 and 2005.

Working in partnership with International Animal Rescue, YIARI has planted over 130,000 trees. The wider forest landscape protection work has safeguarded 300,000 hectares of forest, much of which is important habitat for iconic species like orangutans, and prevented potential emissions of approximately 70 million tonnes of CO₂e from entering the atmosphere. The survival of countless rare and endangered species depend on forest conservation.

You can find out more and support our conservation programme by visiting www.internationalanimalrescue.org

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