



## AN UPDATE FROM OPCA

February was an exciting month for us here at OPCA as we helped our friends at IStopBorneo Wildlife celebrate **World Pangolin Day** on the 20th of February. Pangolins are incredible animals and extremely endearing. Unfortunately, they are the **most heavily trafficked** mammal in the world, being taken from the wild to harvest their scales for traditional medicines. The worst part of this is the fact that the scales are made of keratin, and therefore have no medicinal value whatsoever.

We celebrated the day and these incredible animals with a great interview featuring pangolin experts from both Asia and Africa. We also **launched our short film 'I Am Pangolin'**. If you haven't already seen it then check it out on our YouTube channel.

February was also the month to celebrate and spread awareness for the **fishing cat**. This species is a beautiful yet small carnivorous cat that lives in the wetlands of South and Southeast Asia. Check out our informative video and interview with some of the projects working to protect this cool little cat.

As are the majority of the UK, we are extremely excited to be **creeping into spring**. Waking up to bird song and seeing fields of yellow daffodils, terrapins basking in the local parks and trees becoming full of blossom. Spring is a beautiful time of the year to get out and **enjoy nature**.

We are also excited to enter spring as we have lots of exciting projects and collaborations that we are currently working on that will be launched over the coming months, so watch this space!

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'I Am Pangolin' poster - a short film made by OPCA for World Pangolin Day



Fishing Cat





## MISSION BLUE HOPE SPOT

An update from Love the Oceans

We have some exciting news from Love The Oceans in Mozambique as Jangamo Bay has been **declared a Mission Blue Hope Spot**. Jangamo Bay is an incredible stretch of coast, visitors can embrace the splendour of migrating humpback whales, swim with the majestic manta rays and explore the beautiful coral reefs.

Unfortunately, this coastal area also experiences the prominent global issue of overfishing due to unsustainable practices, including a large amount of shark poaching. This is where Love The Oceans comes in. They have been working hard to **transform this fishing-fuelled economy** into an economy supported by ecotourism. Alleviating this pressure will allow these natural areas to once again flourish.

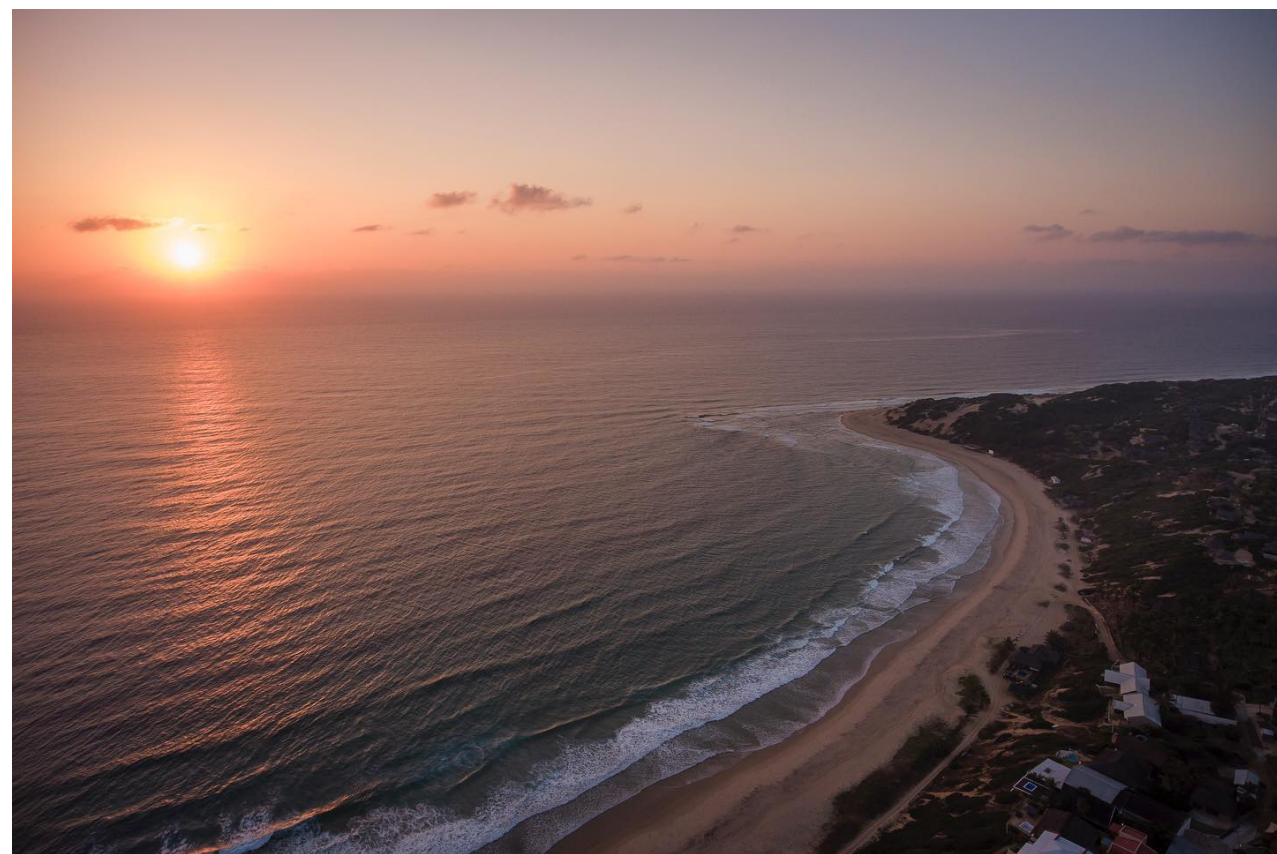
Through ongoing sustainable fishing workshops and educational projects teaching sustainability, biology and marine management, change is on the way. Love the oceans have been able to reach out to **over 1,250 school children**, installing the roots of a community who cares and protects their natural resources. The ultimate goal is to make the bay a **Marine Protected Area (MPA)** through a community-led approach.

In a huge step forward, Mission Blue has now declared Jangamo Bay a Hope Spot in recognition of Love The Oceans work. Hope Spots are special places that are scientifically identified as **critical to the health of the ocean**. Francesca Trotman, Hope Spot Champion and Founder of Love The Oceans, said, "Becoming a Mission Blue Hope Spot is a big step toward establishing a Marine Protected Area in the Bay, and for gaining recognition for the area as **a valuable eco-tourism asset**."

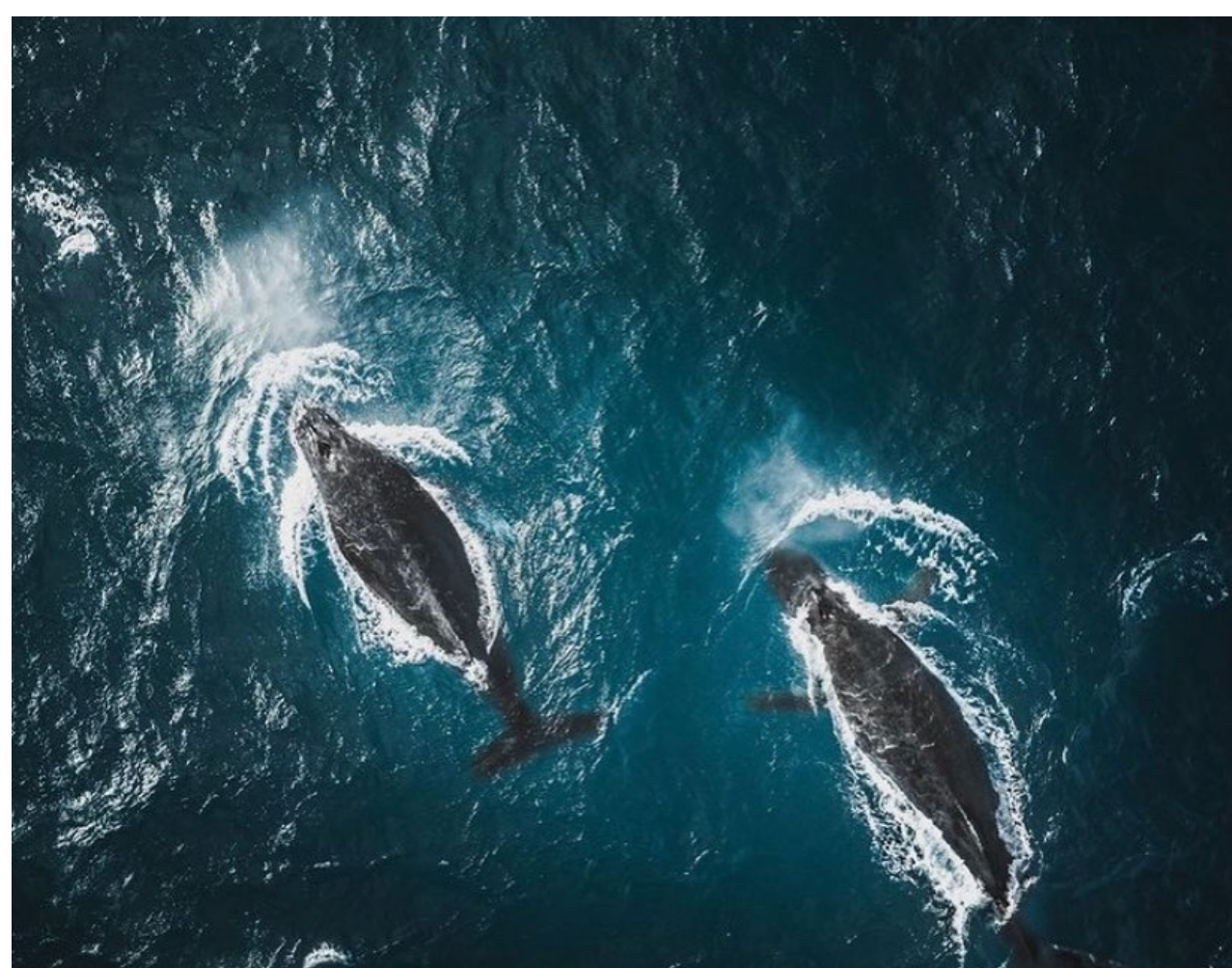
This recognition goes even further with these positive words from **Dr. Sylvia Earle**, a marine ecology hero. "I applaud Francesca, the Love The Oceans team and the entire community for doing what they can to push for a Marine Protected Area in the Jangamo Bay. **With knowing comes caring**, and the education they're bringing to Jangamo Bay can empower young students to become ocean stewards and **protect their blue backyard** for generations to come."

To be able to establish a Marine Protected Area in the bay would greatly increase connectivity between the existing MPAs in southern Mozambique, creating a **corridor of protection**. This new recognition of becoming a Hope Spot is a huge step in the right direction.

We would like to give our thanks and a **huge congratulations** to the team at Love The Oceans.



Jangamo Bay, Mozambique. Photo credit: @jeffbhester



Humpback Whales in Jangamo Bay, Mozambique



Love the Oceans Education Programme





## BATTLING POACHING DURING COVID-19

An update from Bwindi Development Network

Bwindi Development Network (BDN) was founded and registered with the Government of Uganda in 2014 by founder Alex Ngabirano after discovering that there was **uncontrolled forest access and high levels of poaching** in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, the home to over half the world's endangered mountain gorilla population.

BDN established the Bwindi Reformed Poachers Centre with the overall goal of having **zero poaching and improved livelihoods** for people living in the Bwindi community. This project has been hugely successful in changing attitudes towards wildlife among the people living in the frontline communities, and BDN are now currently supporting **246 reformed poachers**.

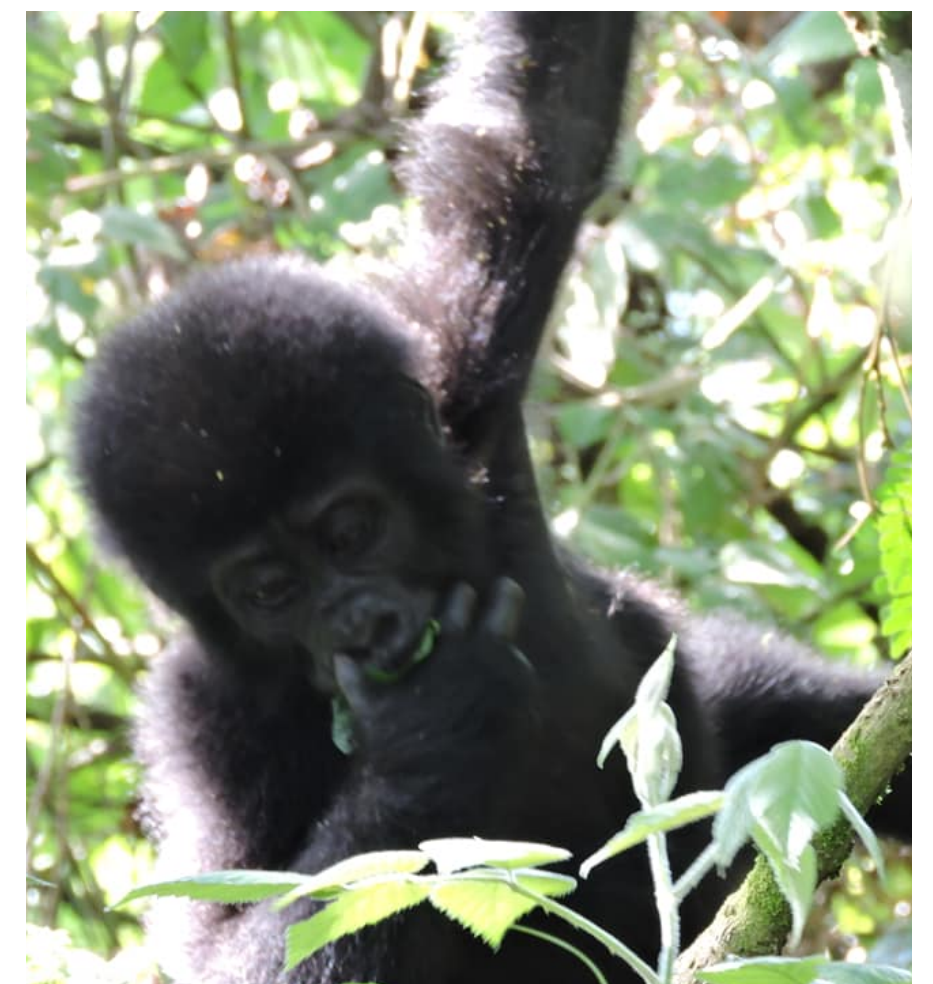
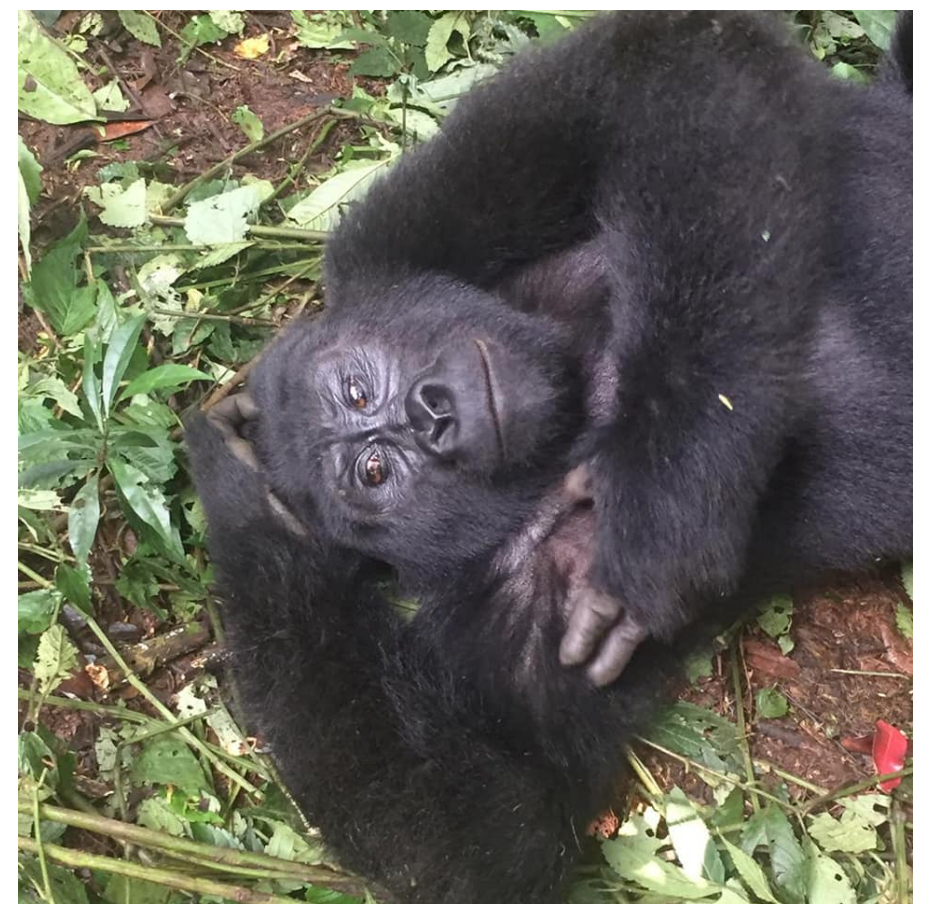
Since Covid-19 their work has become even more vital. The Uganda Wildlife Authority recorded a **50% increase in poaching activity since the pandemic** due to the lack of tourism and there are also concerns for the health of the mountain gorillas who are susceptible to the Covid-19 virus. In February 2021, BDN together with representatives from Conservation Through Public Health and Uganda Wildlife Authority delivered training to members of the local community to address these issues.

The training focused on preventing the spread of Covid-19 among humans as well as **cross transmission to mountain gorillas**, alternative projects to generate income in the absence of tourism, and empowering reformed poachers to **educate their own communities** in the importance of wildlife conservation and the dangers of poaching.

With increased financial support BDN hope to expand their reach within the local communities around the national park, to reform poachers that are still resisting and move towards their goal of creating an ecosystem where **humans and wildlife live in harmony**.



Members of the Bwindi community receiving training on issues related to Covid-19, wildlife conservation and poaching



Mountain Gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park







Here at OPCA we recognise the importance of environmental education. Without installing knowledge, we cannot expect people to recognise the importance of conserving our natural resources. Education is vital in equipping local communities with the solutions that are needed to assure we have healthy and functioning ecosystems around the world.

We have some updates from our network projects, showing how education can make a difference:



KTCC founder, Sapir with students at Greenacre school in Thailand

Over in Thailand, Koh Tan Conservation Centre (KTCC) have been working with the Greenacre school on their new **Persuasive Project**. Students were given the task of raising awareness and gathering public support for a local organisation, and they chose KTCC.

The students had the opportunity to interview Sapir, the founder of KTCC to ask him questions about the local ecosystems and his role in the protection. The students learnt about the **amazing mangroves and coral reefs** that can be found around Koh Samui. The students now have the task of **gathering public support** through videos, posters, letters and meetings with key members of the community.



Students from Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute learning about marine ecosystems

Over in Kenya, the Conservation Education Society (CES) have helped to host students from the **Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute**. The students visited the Marine Education Centre and received a guided tour of the conservation work taking place. The students were able to learn about the marine ecosystems and biodiversity found along the Kenyan coast. Expanding students' knowledge of their local ecosystems is key to their protection.

Our friends at IStopBorneo had a big month as they celebrated World Pangolin Day. Led by their founder Shavez, the day was celebrated with an **online event that included talks, games and quizzes**. Both local and international schools were entertained throughout the day and were able to explore the world of pangolin conservation.



Screenshot from IStopBorneo's World Pangolin Day online event

IStopBorneo have also announced their new initiative **Kids Borneo**. An opportunity for families who visit Borneo to come and visit some amazing natural areas and receive specially designed kids experiences to allow them to **connect with the natural world**.

Great job to all our network projects who are inspiring the next generation to connect with and protect our natural world!