

Crowder–Messersmith Conservation Fund
Nature Forward
8940 Jones Mill Road
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
natureforward.org



Crowder-Messersmith
Conservation Fund

Latest News on the Fund's Grantees

The Crowder-Messersmith Conservation Fund honors Orville Crowder and Don and Sherry Messersmith, leaders in nature tourism, as a means to further global nature conservation. The Fund complements Nature Forward's work by helping small, local conservation and education projects in countries around the world. It provides seed money to communities and individuals whose projects have not attracted major support from other sources. In 2025 it was able to offer 7 grants selected from the over 500 proposals submitted. These grantees join those from 73 countries that have received awards since 1975. This year we awarded our first grant to the country of Malaysia.



Students learn how to use binoculars and guide book in school-based bird clubs near the Rift Valley, Kenya.

2025 Projects Underway

- Develop local awareness, youth education, and conservation skills training to save the globally endangered Indian Skimmer at its last remaining wintering site in Nijhum Dweep National Park, **Bangladesh**.
- Empower local communities and youth and grassroots administrations for sustainable management of the Blue Nile Headwaters through training in sustainable waste oil management in **Ethiopia**.
- Work with local hiking guides and conservation scientists to develop responsible visitation guides for in-situ conservation science education of the rare Corpse Flower in biodiverse hiking areas in **Malaysia**.
- Catalyze long-term conservation efforts for protection of the critically endangered Taita Apalis through community engagement in habitat restoration, education through bird conservation clubs and monitoring training, and developing a community wildlife crime reporting system in Taita Hills, **Kenya**.
- Develop a community-driven conservation model to protect the Endangered African Green Sea Turtle, through integrating turtle monitoring, eco-tourism initiatives that include school children in beach patrols, turtle festivals, and production of turtle-themed souvenirs to generate funds for future work in the Volta Region of **Ghana**.
- Enhance conservation management of the critically endangered Dalmation Pelican by involving local stakeholders in conservation measures to reduce illegal killing and disturbance through improving nesting conditions, establishing patrolling schemes, and enhancing conservation management in the Khar-Us Lake protected areas in **Mongolia**.
- Address the loss of nesting palms in the population decline of the Endangered Santa Marta Parakeet through collaboration with the indigenous Arhuacos community in collecting information on the bird's presence and habitat, establishing palm nurseries, and training the community in construction and monitoring of nest boxes and identification of key plant species in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, **Colombia**.



Dalmation Pelican education materials, Mongolia



Developing collaborations with the Indigenous Arhuacos in Colombia

2024 Projects Completed

- Education and outreach efforts to raise awareness about the critically endangered Vallarta mud turtle in the Ameca River region in **Mexico** were met with widespread enthusiasm from students, teachers, and community members. The students engaged in turtle related artistic and recreational activities, and distribution of 10,000 QR code stickers leading over 1500 individual visitors to their educational website.
- In **Kenya**, community education and skills training were undertaken to increase the awareness of the importance of protecting local snakes, including educational programs for children, teaching adults ways to prevent snakes from moving into their homesteads, and how to safely guide snakes away, and training in snakebite first aid.
- In **Cameroon**, conversations with traditional and indigenous community leaders, multilingual micro-radio programs, billboards, and on-line messaging about the creation and status of the Mount Muanenguba Herpeto-Ornithological Sanctuary, reached thousands of community members and pledges of active support for future project activities.
- In **Kenya**, combined classroom learning, training in practical conservation skills, and community outreach addressed growing threats to native birds in the Rift Valley. Successes included formation of fifty school-based bird-clubs that promote long-term engagement in conservation efforts, and an outreach model scalable and aligned with national education and conservation priorities.
- In **Nepal** two successfully established community-based nurseries propagated approximately 500 seedlings to restore the local population of the endangered East Himalayan Yew in two community forests. The capacity-building training has enabled the Community Forest User Groups to manage the nurseries over the long run.
- In **Kazakhstan**, the Tasbaqa Foundation's "I'm Not a Toy" project is empowering children to help protect and restore populations of the Vulnerable Central Asian tortoise, resulting in a shift in how children and adults perceive tortoises - from pets to wild animals needing protection. The project has catalyzed a growing community that is now sharing information about the project via contacts, social media, and monitoring pet shops and online platforms for tortoise sales.
- In **Albania**, critical knowledge of fisheries practices impacting the rare and critically endangered Adriatic Spiny Butterfly and Bull Ray were garnered through a series of workshops and interviews with small and commercial scale fisherman. Ongoing outreach includes training of fisherman on protocols to minimize impact on the rays and training of local university and high school students in ecology and conservation.

Thank You C–M Committee Members

The Crowder-Messersmith Fund would like to thank its committee members, who volunteer their time and expertise: Daphne Gemmill (chair), Betsy Connole, Marcie Francis, Vance Hyndman, Chris Herman, Alan Johnston, Linette Landers, Bob Gibson, and Kraemer Lovelace; and to Rhonda Kranz who provides the all-important staff support. Thank you to Pam Oves for the design and layout of the newsletter.

Thank you to our Donors!

A special thank you to our donors who make these grants possible!

If you would like to donate you can do so online at <https://give.natureforward.org/give/651156>. You can also send a check to: Crowder-Messersmith Fund, Nature Forward, 8940 Jones Mill Rd., Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Please be sure to designate your donation to the Crowder-Messersmith Conservation Fund.

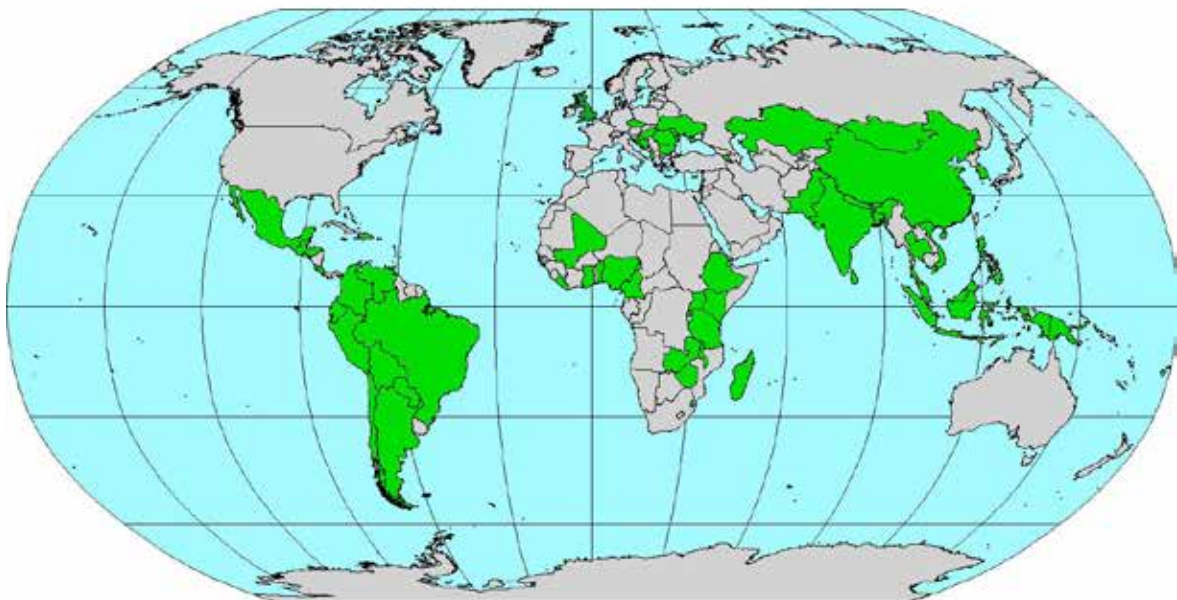
Contributions to the Crowder–Messersmith Conservation Fund

This small, innovative grants program, together with the nature travel program, allows Nature Forward members to experience other cultures and environments and to promote conservation awareness and protection beyond our borders. Your contributions to the Fund allow us to support more projects in developing countries.

To Receive Our Annual Newsletter

Please send your email to CMAward@natureforward.org if you would like to receive future newsletters and announcements of CMCF events. Your email will be used solely for CMCF activities.

Where are Crowder–Messersmith Conservation Grants located?



The map illustrates countries (in green) which have received grants.

<p>AFRICA</p> <p>Benin 4</p> <p>Cameroons 8</p> <p>Cape Verde 4</p> <p>Ethiopia 6</p> <p>Gambia 1</p> <p>Ghana 4</p> <p>Kenya 15</p> <p>Liberia 1</p> <p>Madagascar 3</p> <p>Malawi 1</p> <p>Mali 1</p> <p>Nigeria 2</p> <p>Rwanda 1</p> <p>Swaziland 1</p> <p>Tanzania 2</p> <p>Uganda 7</p> <p>Zambia 1</p> <p>Zimbabwe 2</p> <p>AMERICAS</p> <p>Argentina 4</p> <p>Belize 3</p> <p>Bolivia 4</p> <p>Brazil 4</p> <p>Chile 1</p> <p>Colombia 6</p> <p>Costa Rica 4</p> <p>Dominican Republic 1</p>	<p>Ecuador 10</p> <p>El Salvador 1</p> <p>Falkland Islands 2</p> <p>Guatemala 3</p> <p>Honduras 5</p> <p>Mexico 10</p> <p>Paraguay 1</p> <p>Peru 7</p> <p>Venezuela 1</p> <p>USA 2</p> <p>ASIA & THE PACIFIC</p> <p>Bangladesh 2</p> <p>Bhutan 1</p> <p>China 11</p> <p>Fiji 1</p> <p>India 12</p> <p>Indonesia 1</p> <p>Kazakhstan 1</p> <p>Malayasia 1</p> <p>Mongolia 1</p> <p>Nepal 16</p> <p>Pakistan 1</p> <p>Papua New Guinea 4</p> <p>Philippines 1</p> <p>South Korea 1</p> <p>Sri Lanka 4</p> <p>Thailand 1</p> <p>Vietnam 1</p>	<p>CARIBBEAN</p> <p>Bahamas 2</p> <p>Curacao 1</p> <p>Dominican Republic 1</p> <p>Jamaica 1</p> <p>Puerto Rico 3</p> <p>Trinidad and Tobago 2</p> <p>West Indies 1</p> <p>EUROPE & MID EAST</p> <p>Albania 1</p> <p>Armenia 1</p> <p>Bosnia-Herzegovina 1</p> <p>Bulgaria 1</p> <p>Croatia 1</p> <p>Cyprus 12</p> <p>Czech Republic 1</p> <p>Hungary 1</p> <p>Israel 4</p> <p>Kazakhstan 1</p> <p>Moldova 3</p> <p>Romania 1</p> <p>United Kingdom 4</p> <p>Ukraine 5</p>
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Number of grants given to each of the 73 countries funded.