

fibres polluting the marine environment, whether from synthetic clothing via washing machines or directly from ropes and nets used at sea.

Across our work, FFI aims to provide strong evidence-based advice on potential solutions to marine plastic pollution. Although FFI recognizes that plastic can have a vital role in global society (e.g. in healthcare and in some situations for providing access to safe water), we also advocate careful and thoughtful use of plastic, using it only where it is determined to be necessary and the best solution relative to alternative materials. We also disseminate key stories about marine plastics issues, particularly with an international flavour, through our [@marine_plastics](#) Twitter account.

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Local community neutralizes traditional wolf traps and builds a stupa

During May–June 2018 the Buddhist Chang pa pastoral people of Chushul village in the Indian Changthang neutralized four traditional pit traps used for trapping wolves *Canis lupus* and symbolically built a stupa (a Buddhist ritual structure) adjacent to one of the traps (Plate 1). This is a pioneering community-led initiative for large carnivore conservation.

The Chang pa community has traditionally used traps (locally called *shang-dong*, derived from *shangku*, wolf, and *dong*, trap) to trap and kill wolves in retaliation for livestock predation. These traps, typically built near villages or herder camps, comprise large pits (3–4.5 m diameter, 2.5–3 m deep) with inverted funnel-shaped stone walls.



PLATE 1 Inauguration ceremony for the stupa (a Buddhist ritual structure) built adjacent to one of the neutralized wolf traps in the Indian Changthang.

Bait of livestock remains attracts wolves but the funnel shaped walls prevent them from escaping. Typically the trapped wolves would be pelted to death with stones and the carcass then carried around neighbouring areas by the hunters, who would be rewarded by the villagers. Occasionally snow leopards become trapped, and are often killed.

Following 2 years of discussion between Chushul villagers and conservationists from the Nature Conservation Foundation and Snow Leopard Trust, the community agreed to dismantle the four existing wolf-traps in their area. To conserve their historical and cultural value, the traps were neutralized rather than destroyed. A stupa built adjacent to one of the traps was consecrated by His Eminence Bakula Rangdol Nyima Rinpoche, a revered Buddhist monk, on 14 June 2018, with support from the Leh district administration, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Department of Wildlife Protection, Himalayan Cultural Heritage Foundation, and Chushul Youth and Gompa (Monastery) associations.

Conservation of large carnivores in multiple-use landscapes continues to be a challenge. The Tibetan Plateau and the Trans-Himalaya comprise 2.6 million km² of high altitude, cold desert ecosystem, of which the north-west is known as the Changthang (Northern Plains). The mainstay of the nomadic peoples of Changthang, the Chang pa, is livestock grazing, especially cashmere (pashmina) goats. In the Indian Changthang 55% of households depend on cashmere production, producing c. 37,000 kg of cashmere annually.

The Changthang region also supports 13 species of wild carnivores, of which wolves are the most widespread. They are the main predator of livestock, accounting for up to 60% of total livestock depredation. Managing wolf depredation is challenging as they are highly mobile, with large home ranges.

The global demand for cashmere has resulted in overstocking of these rangelands, caused depletion of wild herbivore populations, and resulted in intensified conflicts as a result of livestock depredation by wolves and snow leopards (Berger et al., 2013, *Conservation Biology*, 27, 679–689). The conservation effort of the Chushul community is part of a larger initiative, working with herding communities to make cashmere production sustainable and conservation friendly. A certification system implemented by the Nature Conservation Foundation and the Snow Leopard Trust in partnership with the All Changthang Pashmina Growers Marketing Cooperative Society encourages and supports several sustainable livestock grazing practices: creation of village wildlife reserves, rotational grazing, management of carnivore-caused livestock damage through predator-proofing of livestock corrals and livestock insurance, and cessation of retaliatory killing of carnivores. Cashmere from partner herder communities implementing these practices is certified snow leopard friendly and attracts

a modest premium for the herders. With joint commitment for wildlife conservation from communities and conservation agencies, this novel initiative by the Chushul community indicates that large carnivores, such as wolves and snow leopards, and agro-pastoralist communities can coexist.

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A new 10-year conservation action plan for the western chimpanzee

The Critically Endangered western chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes verus*, listed in Appendix 1 of CITES and in Class A of the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, is estimated to have undergone a 20% reduction in range and an 80% decline in abundance during 1990–2014 (Humble et al., 2016, IUCN Red List; Kühl et al., 2017, *American Journal of Primatology*, 79, e22681). This decline is linked to a multitude of threats, including poverty, civil conflict, human–wildlife disease transmission, an increasing human population, habitat loss and fragmentation, the illegal pet trade, extractive industries, infrastructure development, a lack of law enforcement and political instability. Although western chimpanzees are protected by national and international laws throughout their range, enforcement and government capacity is weak, and > 70% occur outside protected areas (<http://apes.eva.mpg.de>). The western chimpanzee is patchily distributed across eight countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone) and probably extinct in Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo (Humble et al., op. cit.). Their total population is estimated to be 35,000 (range 15,000–65,000; Kühl et al., op. cit.).

In 2003 a 10-year Regional Action Plan for West African Chimpanzees generated numerous conservation actions (Kormos et al., 2003, *West African Chimpanzees. Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*, IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group). In light of the catastrophic decline of this subspecies, and emerging threats, Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Liberia, teamed up with the Section on Great Apes of the IUCN Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group in 2016 to coordinate the development of a revised 10-year regional action plan for the western chimpanzee. The goal was to ensure that regional action for conservation of the subspecies targets emerging key threats and is coordinated amongst stakeholders and supported in the long term.

In December 2017 FFI and the Section on Great Apes organized a regional western chimpanzee action planning workshop in Monrovia, Liberia, convened by the Forestry Development Authority (Liberia's governmental body charged with protecting forests and wildlife). A technical committee of international experts provided support to plan the agenda using an open standards conservation action plan approach (<http://cmp-openstandards.org>). Over 60 experts and policy makers across the western chimpanzee range state countries attended, along with specialists in ape conservation. The workshop was funded by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, ARCUS Foundation, and the USAID West Africa Biodiversity Climate Change programme.

During the 5-day workshop participants (1) reviewed data on the status of and threats to the western chimpanzee, (2) analysed the regional context as a basis for developing updated region-wide strategies for western chimpanzee conservation, (3) obtained information on current research and conservation work carried out by stakeholders across the region, (4) identified the conditions necessary for the implementation of the regional conservation action plan, and (5) agreed on the next steps necessary for finalizing the regional conservation action plan for the western chimpanzee.

The new 10-year regional western chimpanzee action plan is expected to be finalized and disseminated in early 2019. Stakeholders remain committed to work towards a vision in which viable populations of western chimpanzees thrive in healthy ecosystems and coexist in harmony with human populations.

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Can early- and mid-career conservationists get better career guidance?

In July 2017 the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) and WWF's Russell E. Train Education for Nature Program (EFN) hosted a knowledge café at the Society for Conservation Biology's 28th International Congress for Conservation Biology in Cartagena, Colombia. The event brought together 20 participants from 10 countries (Brazil, China, Colombia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Tanzania, UK, USA and Viet Nam) for an open and participatory discussion, based on structured questions, to help understand the types and levels of support required for early and mid-