



SAOLA

FOUNDATION

FOR

ANNAMITE MOUNTAINS
CONSERVATION

ANNUAL
REPORT
2022

Rediscovering Saola

“*The greatest threat to Saola is the ticking clock. With every day that goes by, our chance to save this species slips further away. This is a rescue mission, and we must not run out of time!*”
Lorraine Scotson, CEO



Saola have tiptoed around the forests of the Annamites Mountains for millions of years unchanged, the sole representative of its genus Pseudorxy. It was first described by science only 30 years ago, and it was last caught on a camera trap (in Vietnam) ten years ago.

Saving Saola won't happen by chance. Success in such extraordinary circumstances requires an extraordinary approach. The Saola Foundation have built a multi-disciplinary field conservation team unlike any seen before in the region. We are integrating state-of-the-art tools and methodology in the race against time to find and save Saola. Our search strategy for Saola will integrate three specialist components: scent detection dogs, human wildlife trackers and rapid in-situ DNA testing technology.

To build this multi-disciplinary team, we are working with some of the world's best technical partners: Working Dogs for Conservation, wildlife tracking experts from the CyberTracker network, and the Wildlife Conservation Society Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory. This international expertise is being paired with an in-country team we are building from the ground up, sourcing skills and expertise found within the indigenous communities of the Annamite Mountains. This multi-disciplinary research and monitoring team will be deployed for a minimum of two years in the field to search intensively for Saola in the Annamite Mountains of Lao PDR. This will be a team and search unlike anything fielded before in Southeast Asia.

...can Saola be detected in such a way to allow safe and viable capture for conservation breeding?

Central to our program is the question, can Saola be detected in such a way to allow safe and viable capture for conservation breeding? Monitoring individual Saolas, will provide insight into the behavioural patterns of this specie, allowing us to identify safe methods of capture. Additionally, each Saola we monitor will provide information on the characteristic of tracks and other sign from this species – including providing dung samples to train scent detection dogs - and so improve our ability to find more Saolas.



Our approach to saving Saola has far-reaching ramifications for future conservation in the Annamite Mountains. The Annamite Mountains is an area of exceptional biodiversity importance, with a combination of high species richness, a high number of endemic species, and high threatened status of those species. These attributes, combined with relatively low investment in conservation to-date, make the Annamites region one of the highest global priorities for conservation attention. Our program will provide career opportunities to some of the most promising young conservationists in Lao, as well as employment for village partners in the Saola's range. We are sowing the seeds for long-term capacity for conservation of the Annamites.

While focused initially on Saola, our multi-disciplinary field team is in this for the long-run, with a vision of effecting ongoing positive conservation change in the Annamite Mountains.

Achievements in 2022

In 2022, the Saola Foundation continued our trend of excellent progress. We formed the core of our field team, continued to build our supporter base and began field operations. Here are some of our achievement highlights from the past year.

Grew our team



Recruited exceptional Lao candidates to form a multidisciplinary team, to implement the Saola search. We have assembled an incredible team of 25 Lao nationals, drawn from a diversity of backgrounds and ethnic groups.

Recruited talented Grants and Communications Assistant, Lulu Deng.

Added new expertise to our Board of Directors and Advisory Council (see page 9.)

Expanded Saola search efforts



Supported partners to detect Saola by training rangers to collect dung samples.

Developed new major support



Secured 100,000 US\$ grant from Liz Clairborne Art Ortenberg Foundation.

Launched the Saola Foundation's Gold Circle initiative, with the first three members contributing more than 200,000 US\$ to build the Saola search team.

Mobilized Saola DNA test kit



Validated WCS-developed rapid in-situ test kit and began testing samples.

Field trials



Reconnaissance missions with Working Dogs for Conservation and CyberTracker expert.

Reached new audiences



Launched on Facebook and Instagram, engaging with a worldwide audience.

Continued partnerships with some of our most important supporters



Repeat funding grants worth 125,000 US\$ from Synchronicity Earth, Beauval Nature and Mandai Nature.

“I'm extremely proud of what the Saola Foundation has achieved this past year. We have such a fantastic team, and network of supporters. Together, we're getting this done - for Saola, and the world.
Bill Robichaud, President

Our supporters

2022 was our most successful year yet in fundraising, with our existing donors displaying commitment and increasing confidence in our program, and with an ever-expanding donor base. We have benefited from some incredible acts of generosity from within our own team, with significant donations from within our Board of Directors, Advisory Council, and staff. We are so very grateful for this growing support, which gives Saola the chance it needs.

Saola Foundation 2022 donors

Major gifts of at least \$50,000:

Beauval Nature Association
Liz Claiborne Art Ortenberg Foundation
Synchronicity Earth
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

Gifts of \$10,000 - \$49,999

Dallas Zoo
Eleanor Briggs
Kristine Karnos
Mandai Nature
Odense Zoo
Opel Zoo
Scentbird Inc.
Wroclaw Zoo Foundation
– DODO



Gifts of \$1,000 – \$9,999

George Archibald
ARTIS Amsterdam Royal Zoo
CERZA Parc Zoologique Lisieux
Steven and Karin Chase
Fossil Rim Wildlife Center
Henry Vilas Zoo
Andrew and Paula Holman
David Hulse
Maue Kay Foundation
Mulhouse Zoo
David Posner
Lorraine Scotson
Linda Tabor-Beck
Marty Talbot
The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust
The Ellen Fund
Clayton and Zoë Williams

Other donors:

Joseph Allen
Matthew Ardaiole
Asian Arks
Alessandro Badalotti
Perri Black
Meghan Bohn
Terry Bolger
Marian Castelli
Corina Cathomen
Elvin Chan
Stephen Chiquoine
Nguyen Chuong
Nguyen
Johanna Chworowsky
Peter Chworowsky
Irene Clemente
Comma Coffee

Amy Cookson
Angela Dai
Jennifer Draime
Eric Felthausen
Dominic Frezza
Mathew Frith
Gary Galbreath
Cecilia Georgiles
Troy Hansel
Michelle Hatwood
Horribly Hilly Hundreds
Kenji Ishiwada
Arlyne Johnson and
Michael Hedemark
Brian Johnson
James Kelly
Robin Kepple
Ellen Logue

Andrew Luk
Rachel Maffitt
Jane Maher
Nadine Martin
Nick Mason
Charles McCaffree
John McLaughlin
Shirley Micallef
Nathan Morehart
Louise O'Leary
Susie and Stephen Offord-
Woolley
Alice Othmer
Phoutsakhone Ounchith
Jody Palmer
Kathryn Robichaud
Ihor Romanov
Harald Röscher

Lorraine Scotson
Mark Sidel
Johanna Stark
Kristin Steinmetz
Helen Steussy
Anthony Stones
Glen Sullivan
Christine Tarbitt
Michele Thompson
Brooke Truesdale
Nathan Varley
Friederike von Houwald
Andrea Wagoner and
Roger Ruggeri
WWF Laos and WWF
Greater Mekong
Anthony Zola

Saola Gold Circle

In 2022, we were delighted to introduce a new initiative, the Saola Gold Circle. This is an exclusive partnership for our most generous donors. With members donating at least US\$ 50,000 in one year, the goal of the Saola Gold Circle is to raise at least US\$1M for the intensive two-year Saola search.

Membership comes with a number of exclusive benefits, including the option to visit the search team in the field – and maybe you could be there when a Saola is found!

If you or your organization would like to learn more about the Saola Gold Circle and the benefits of membership, please contact Saola Foundation President Bill Robichaud (bill@saolafoundation.org) or CEO Lorraine Scotson (lorraine@saolafoundation.org)

SAOLA GOLD CIRCLE



*Partners who have invested at least \$50,000 within one year
in the Saola Foundation's Saola search program*

Impact



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Working within the global biodiversity hotspot of the Annamite Mountains, the greatest impact of our program thus far has been to grow, mentor and train new Lao capacity for cutting-edge field research and conservation. Our nationwide Lao team recruitment campaign reached into the indigenous communities of the Annamite Mountains, resulting in a huge number of applications to join the Saola search team (for positions as sign detection dog handlers, wildlife trackers and field technicians). A rigorous screening and evaluation process, including multi-stage interviews, *ex-situ* assessment and *in-situ* field trials involving experts in detection dogs and wildlife tracking, led to jobs being offered to 25 new top- class recruits.

The result – formation of one of the most innovative field conservation teams ever seen in the region. Our goal is that the integrated team will be both a model for, and an active player in, field conservation for many years to come. Saola is just the start.



Goals for 2023

After a highly active and productive 2022, with your support we will maintain this excellent momentum in 2023. Our main goals for 2023 are:

Train the search team

In 2022 we met our important goals of recruiting members of the Saola search team (detection dog handlers, wildlife trackers and field technicians), and assembling the search tools (most importantly, a rapid Saola DNA test kit developed for us by the WCS Molecular Diagnostics Lab). Next step is to finish training and integrating the team in the field. With the conclusion of their training in 2023, we will have assembled an unprecedented national wildlife research and conservation team, which will continue to grow in skill with ongoing capacity building using world-leading expertise.



Continue to inspire the international support to make the intensive search possible.

We have an ambitious program of work ahead in 2023, and it has potential to be a pivotal year for Saola conservation. To support the team and our intensive search, we will raise US\$1.8M in 2023. One of our main objectives is to inspire additional partners to join the Saola Gold Circle of donors.



Begin the Saola intensive search

After all the hard work and preparations of the past two years, in 2023 we are poised to begin one of the most intensive and important searches of our time for a wild animal. We are entering an incredibly exciting and pivotal phase of the Saola program!



“With your support, one of the greatest treasure hunts in history is about to begin. When we find the Saola, the world will be richer for it.”
Steve Burns, Chair

Our Vision

A stunningly beautiful and enigmatic icon of the Annamite Mountains, the Saola is the perfect flagship for an innovative and effective approach to conservation of Annamites biodiversity.

The Annamites are ranked as one of the world's 200 most important bioregions, hosting possibly the highest concentration of continental-based endemic species in the world. The area's extraordinary concentration of highly threatened endemic species, coupled with a recent surge in commercial poaching and relatively low levels of conservation investment (compared with other global priority regions), make the Annamite Mountains one of the most important areas in the world for increased conservation investment.

Remarkably, the Annamites have also been described as an area of “linguistic and cultural mega-diversity” by anthropologist James Chamberlain. The region's rich biodiversity is paralleled by a rich human diversity of cultures, many of which are found only in the Annamites and are reliant on a

healthy forest for their livelihoods. The Annamites are a remarkable, globally significant nexus of cultural and biological diversity.

Our vision is to deliver strategic, long-term improvement in biodiversity conservation of the Annamite Mountains. Our cutting-edge field conservation team will be deployed initially to detect, monitor and help save the Saola - and the considerable challenge of finding Saola will provide a robust proof of concept. At the same, our field program will bring economic benefits and employment opportunities for villagers in the Annamites, and for an emerging generation of talented Lao conservationists. We envision that our strongly focused program will result in a wide ripple of benefits.

“The tools we need to save Saola are the tools we need to affect long-term change for the Annamites as a whole.

**Rob Timmins, Saola Foundation
Technical Director**





Meet The Foundation

The Saola Foundation is an ever-growing team with three new members joining this year.

Executive and Core Staff

Dr. Lorraine Scotson, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and member of Board of Directors

Bill Robichaud, President and member of Board of Directors

Lulu Deng, Grants and Communications Assistant (new in 2022)

Malina Phavanh, Administrative Assistant

Other members of the Board of Directors

Steve Burns, Board Chair

Frank Hawkins (new in 2022)

Andrew Holman, Treasurer

David Hulse

Susie Offord-Woolley

Technical Staff

Rob Timmins, Technical Director

Chanthasone Phommachanh, Lao Programs Director

Xaisavanh Khiewvongphachan, Field Coordinator

Research Associate

Minh Nguyen, Doctoral candidate, Colorado State University

Volunteers

Corey Chimko, Digital Content Technician

Ann-Marie Holmes, Newsletter Manager

Bill Leacock, Student Support

Eric Losh, Illustrator

Ellen Susan Wieczorek, Social Media Coordinator

Advisory Council

Dr. George Archibald, Co-Founder & Senior Conservationist, International Crane Foundation

Eric Bairrão Ruivo, Science, Collection and Conservation Director at Beauval Zoo (new in 2022)

Troy Hansel, Conservation Planning and Monitoring Consultant, Lao PDR

Nguyen Duc Tu, Biodiversity Coordinator, IUCN/CEPF National Coordinator, Vietnam

Steve Shurter, Executive Director, White Oak Conservation

Michele Thompson, Professor of Southeast Asia History, Southern Connecticut State University

Brooke Truesdale, Director of Development, Reef Check Foundation

And many thanks to those left the Saola Foundation in 2022, after contributing so much to our mission:

Phoutsahone Ounchith, Board Member
Sounutda Maniphonh, Lao Admin Assistant

Grace Vosen, Volunteer Editor
Briony Black, Grants Assistant

Financial Report

Saola Foundation Inc. Statement of Activity January – December 2022

<i>Revenue</i>	<i>Total (US\$)</i>
Individual Contributions	62,133
Organization and Foundation Grants	335,080
Other Fundraising Revenue	13,516
Total Revenue	410,729
<i>Expenses</i>	<i>Total (US\$)</i>
Personnel Costs	188,760
Operating Expenses	145,081
Total Revenue	333,841
<i>Financial Position</i>	<i>Total (US\$)</i>
Surplus/(Deficit)	76,888

“ Saving Saola is necessarily a team effort – and our donors are a crucial part of that team. We are so grateful for their faith and support – without which none of what we've achieved would be possible.

Bill Robichaud, President

How you can be a part of saving Saola

*By working together, we can find, and thus save, Saola.
Please join us!*

*For more information about supporting our program,
please contact Dr. Lorraine Scotson, CEO at
lorraine@saolafoundation.org or Bill Robichaud, President at
bill@saolafoundation.org*

*And follow the exciting Saola search by joining our newsletter!:
<https://www.saolafoundation.org/newsletter>*

Thank you!

*“If Saola still walk this Earth, it will be the Saola Foundation's expert field
researchers who find, protect and restore them in the Annamite Mountains.”*

*Kent Wommack, Executive Director,
Liz Claiborne & Art Ortenberg Foundation*

*This Annual Report was produced with assistance from Synchronicity Earth,
special thanks to Nina Seale.*

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