

Rotary Action Group for Endangered Species (RAGES) Newsletter



Elephants of Selenkay, Kenya.

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- **HOF areas of focus** - Dire Straits for big animals, plant species, species in flight, habitats, marine species, and seeing endangered species through art. Art contest announcement - closing April 30, 2025.
- **Getting ready for RICON Calgary**

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- **Covering RAGES expenses for supporting club projects**

We wish there were not so many endangered species in the world. Let's do something about it.

From the Chair: What is your passion? What and how do we save?

Thank you, new board members, and of this RAG, people who believe in the Conservation of Declining Species. We are restarting this newsletter to tell stories, stories about you and your Rotary, or in your own work. What are you doing for plant and animal species on the decline? We are looking for photos, stories, and articles on your passion for endangered species and how we work towards bringing them back from the edge of extinction.

Salute to Tom Tochterman

Thank you **Tom Tochterman** (shown at the RAGES booth in Singapore May 2023) for six years on the Board, mostly as **Chair**, and holding **RAGES** together with his persistence at the International Rotary Conventions. His work in Africa is stellar and important for habitats, community, poacher stops, getting Black Mambas together to take care of things, and for our habitat-critical and loved declining species: Rhinos.



Welcome to more than 200 new members -This is a Rotary **Action Group**

For this group your membership relies on your passion for all species and particularly those that are threatened with extinction. You can contribute to this RAG with your projects and your club service, and also financial support (see

item below). This newsletter will be followed by a request for updated information from all current Sanct members. Please respond to that request.

We believe that we can make more impact with education. One of the immediate benefits of joining RAGES is the collaboration that we have with the **Rotary Fellowship of Wildlifers for Conservation**. They hold a very successful presentation series on the 5th day of every month at 7:30pm IST (2:00pm UTC Greenwich). Please join in with Wildlifers on Thursday September 5th for a presentation on "Critical Elephant Habitat Restoration". You are most welcome. You can view their entire recorded series at <https://www.rotaryfellowshipforwildlife.org/events>



Critical Elephant Habitat Restoration by Meera Chandran

Date & Time: Thursday, September 5th, 2024, 7:30pm IST

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83898978576?pwd=v2fGEWtNfettbjzYJobnjsPkr1niP1>

Meeting ID: 838 9897 8576

Passcode: RFWC050924

The RAGES Board of Directors

We currently have 10 members of the RAGES Board of Director

Executive Board

Chair: Dr Christopher Puttock (2023-2026)

Vice Chair: Bruce Steele-Gray (2019-2025*)

Cadre Technical Officer: Dr Mina Venkataraman 2023-2026)

Officer: Terrell Erickson (2024-2027)

Members at Large - Directors

DG Jacques Venter (2019-2025*)

David Briggs (2019-2025*)

Raemonde Bezenar (2019-2025*)

Madhumita Bishnu (2023-2026)

Murray Difford (2023-2026)

Madeleine Webber (2023-2026)

*Four members of the current board: Steele-Gray, Venter, Briggs, and Bezenar, will term-out from six years on the Board on June 30, 2025. We are now taking nominations to replace these Directors. Talk with or email Christopher Puttock if interested.

RAGES will hold its **Annual General Meeting on Saturday September 21, 2024 at 3:00pm UTC**

Our AGM will be one hour. An agenda will be sent out next week. Our zoom link will be <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88319633409?pwd=TEh1bmhiaXBLb3laTEdFWUUzc1A3Zz09> - Dr. Christopher Puttock

RICON Singapore - Mina Venkataraman, Tom Tochtermann and Terrell Erickson

RAGTime was attended by RAGES members Mina, Terrell, Christopher, Tom and Julie Tochtermann and about 100 others. For the first time RAGES had a banner. RAGTime was attended by RIPE Stephanie Urchick, DRRN Judith Diment MBE, RIPP Mark Maloney, RIPP Ian Riseley, RIPP Holger Knaack, and RIPN Mario Cesar de Camargo and other senior rotary leadership and 20 Rotary Action Group's leadership.

(*Stephanie, Chris, Judith and Mark pictured right)



The Breakout Session on Tuesday afternoon was well attended in a large room. Speakers covered endangered species big and small animals, habitat and ecology, and the impact of invasive species.

RICON Singapore HOF Booth

The House of Friendship (HOF) Booth was very well positioned on the corner of the Peace Park and next to the Environmental Sustainability RAG (ESRAG) and across from the Community Action for Fresh Water (CAFW) Booth, and next to the very popular Taiwan Booth. Because of this, our foot traffic was tremendous and the corner location ideal. Next, we will tell you about what was in the RAGES booth.

The booth had six extraordinary panels and the art award, red panda look-alike, to attract convention attendees. - Terrell Erickson, RAGES Officer

Dire Straits for Big Animals

Most remaining iconic large animals are under threat of being lost forever. Over the past 15,000 years humans have hunted, polluted, and changed habitats leading many species to endangerment and extinction. Many large species are considered trophies by people across the world, as medicinals, as trophies, as carpets, as many things. The remaining few are in remote jungles, enduring grasslands or in oceans and shorelines.

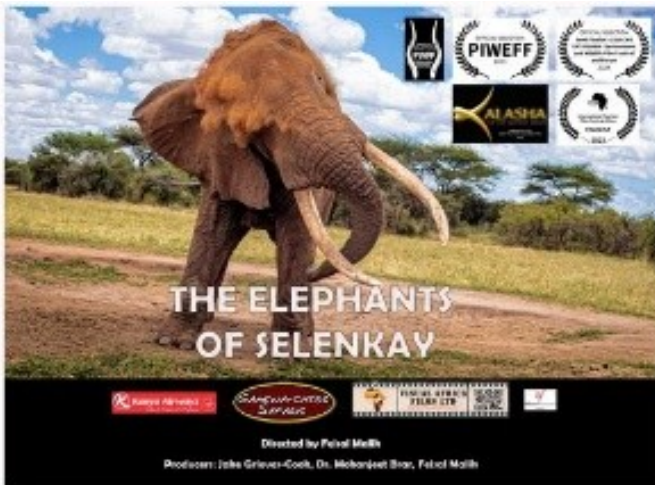
Black Mamba - Rhino Mercy Story



Black Mambas: 36 young rural African women won a United Nations award for 1) daily boundary foot patrols; 2) vehicle night patrols; 3) roadblock checks; 4) public outreach. RAGES can have input to environmental programs and reduce food insecurities.



The Elephants of Selenkay, Kenya



Feisal Mailik is a Kenyan award-winning wildlife filmmaker, and photographer runs Visual Africa Films Ltd. In 2009, he filmed Elephants in Kruger National Park, South Africa. Augmented Reality technology and coffee table books are now in Kenya. An honorary warden with the Kenya Wildlife Service, his project, "The Elephants of Selenkay" is a documentary film, picture exhibition and coffee table book celebrating community-led conservation efforts to see the return of Elephants to

Selenkay after an absence of over 20 years. Now planning a campaign to take these works to villages around the Amboseli Ecosystem.

Dire Straits for Rare and Endangered Plant Species

Many thousands of plant species in the world are becoming endangered or extinct. They are now only found on unique less-touched landscapes, on mountain tops, on unique soils, or on coral reefs. Causes of plant jeopardy include increased human development, agriculture, water and mineral resource exploitation, loss of their associated pollinators and fructivores, and invasive species expansion.

The Western Ghats Rainforests provide examples of endangered plants that are widely important for humans, other animals and forest habitat functions. The species below are all endangered and closely related to food and



medicinal plants in cultivation.

When rare species such as these are gone, complex ecosystems are affected. It has been shown repeatedly that where native plants are restored, hundreds of species of insects, birds and other animals are seen once again. Biodiversity protective measures include the eradication, control, and management of invasive species, and replacement of rare species either from the seed banks or out planted to recreate these ecosystems. Restoration and survival of species requires monitoring and maintenance until full establishment.

Dire Straits for Species in Flight

Over the past 50 years there has been a 70% loss of creatures in the air: birds, bats, bees, butterflies, and many other insects. RAGES identified the drastic decline of the all-important only carrion-eater birds in the world: vultures. On earth we have lost almost 99% of all vulture species.

The vultures of the Western Ghats, India



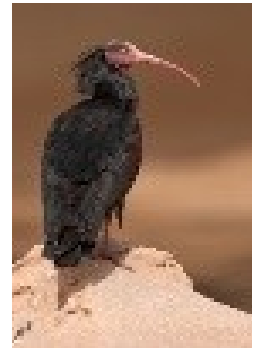
There are 23 species of vulture species left in the world today, including the condor. Nine of 16 old world vultures are rare, threatened, or endangered. Studies found drastic declines for all 9 species in India were caused by residues of the drug diclofenac in livestock carcasses.



A vulture's food includes smaller animals and cattle being killed by tigers, which leave carcasses for vultures. Once scientists found the culprit causing endangerment, the drug has now been banned for livestock and recovery is being monitored.

The Ibis of the World, focus on Morocco

Once revered by ancient Egypt as Dhwtj (Thoth), God of wisdom, the **Ibis** is globally endangered. One, the Northern bald ibis has 700 wild individuals in Morocco, due to habitat changes, pesticide poisoning, human disturbance of nests, and hunting. To save Ibis, member States established a Species Action Plan under the African European Waterbird Agreement.



Dire Straits for Endangered Habitats

Habitats are endangered or extinct due to vast landscape alteration and loss, starting millennia ago after nature rebounded from the last ice age. Humans destroyed forests and native grasslands for firewood, construction, and agriculture, and water



was massively diverted for all uses. Combine these human impacts with industrialization, urban growth, road network dissections, seabed dredging, and invasive species for world-wide losses.

One example: To curb fragmentation, the U.S. and other countries have projects rejoining corridors, modifying culverts for fish passage, and making bridges for animals. Although important, these efforts do not address underlying causes, such as pollution, chemical and physical inputs, light, acoustics and vibrations impacts, invasive species explosions, and climate change.



Awareness of these impacts is being channeled by many significant organizations. The largest convergence of these has been around the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), leading to the Conference of Parties (COPs) for Biodiversity and Climate.

Rotary International has an agreement with UNEP to work on Watersheds worldwide - Mountains to Marine - Community Action for Fresh Water (CAFW).

Dire Straits for Marine Species

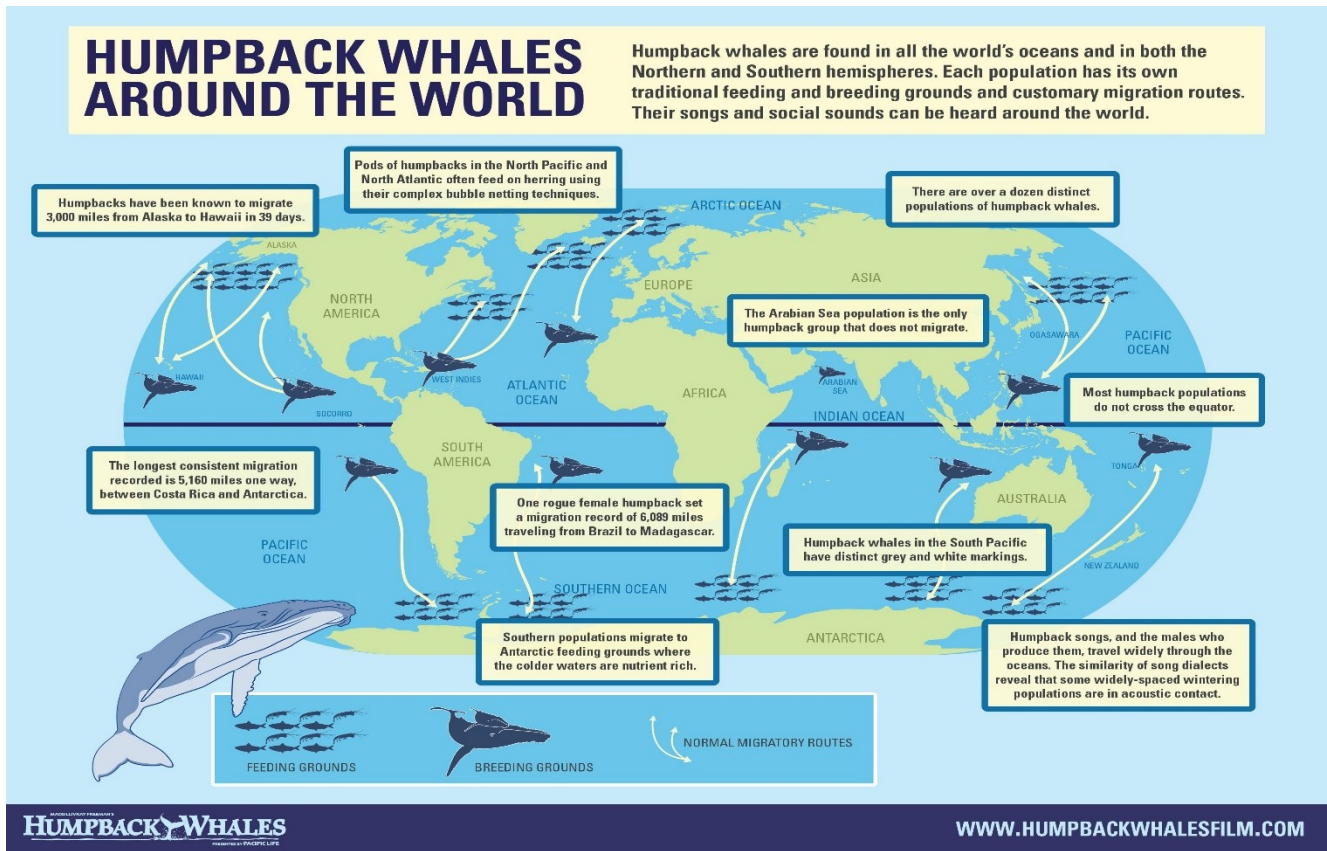
More than 17,903 marine species are threatened with extinction. Habitat loss, disease, pollution (including plastics), and certain fishing methods and ship strikes are the culprits of the decline.

Only seven species of sea turtles are alive today. the IUCN's Red List has all but one [as vulnerable](#) : [Leatherback](#), [Loggerhead](#), [Kemp's Ridley](#), [Green](#), [Olive Ridley](#), and [Hawksbill](#), [found in all oceans except the Arctic and Antarctic](#). The endemic Australian Flatback nests only on Australia's sandy beaches and spends its life on the Australian continental shelf.



Other marine wildlife species travel great distances and require protection across migration routes for breeding, feeding, and raising their young.

Humpbacks (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) have one of the longest migrations of any mammal on the planet. They travel from tropical breeding grounds to colder, more productive feeding grounds.



Dire Straits Reimagined: Endangered Species through Art

The First Annual **Nancy Erickson Endangered Species Art Award**, sponsored by the Erickson and Puttock Conservation Fund:

2024 Recipient: Lauris Reintjes, Missoula, Montana, USA



On Reintjes award winning “creature”: The red panda is the sole remaining member of the Ailuridae, the true pandas. Endangered, IUCN Red Listed since 2015, almost 50% of the red panda’s habitat in the Eastern Himalayas is threatened.

Lauris Reintjes created his panda model with recycled paper, taped, squished, and glued to form the body. He painstakingly attached faux fur, trimmed, then sculpted clay face and feet. Painting eyes and fur; adding whiskers is his favorite part.

His parents met as Rotary year-long exchange students to Sweden. Lauris, 15 years old, has excelled in his art of many worldwide species in peril. He had his first multi-creature show in 2023.

This Endangered Species Art award will be given annually. The Erickson and Puttock Conservation Fund will continue to provide this Award (\$1000 U.S.) and a certificate of achievement. Details about the contest for the award will be forthcoming. The second award will be given at the Breakout session in Calgary, or in the House of Friendship from a venue there. We need great art and music and are also **looking for members interested in being judges in early May 2025.**

RICON Calgary 2025 Breakout Session

We are now considering the theme for our RAGES Breakout Session in Calgary. How about “Communicating Art and Music Through Art and Music for Endangered Species” or would you rather us present on “Mitigating Losses of Species in Peril” (such as light and window mitigation for seabirds, waterholes for grasslands, and other projects). **Let us know what you would like us to explore.**

RAGES - Website - Creating a new one

The RAGES board is looking to move the website from its current location at Rotary Club of Lake Chelan, thanks Tom, where it has been held since 2017. We are not using the Domain name of RAGES as it is \$20,000 to buy. We have other options. Do you need a platform to work with endangered species? We are looking for a Webmaster to extend our reach and current website.

<https://lakechelanrotary.org/rages/>. - Tom Tochterman

Covering RAGES Expenses for Supporting Club Projects

RAGES has never asked for dues payments, and we do not wish to do so currently. There are costs associated with the running of every RAG. These include basic zoom and internet services. Larger costs are those associated with the booth at RICON. This year this came to about \$1000, for the electricity and printing of the panels. finished locally in Singapore. We are looking for donations to cover a similar cost of operations for 2024-2025. Most other RAGs levy \$25-30 per member of their RAGs. Instead of charging a membership fee we would like members to bring their own projects to RAGES and then the club ask for donations from the membership to support projects.