Oryx

Latest Issue: Island conservation

By Cecilia Derrick, 17th September 2025

The latest issue of Oryx explores the unique challenges and rewards of island conservation. From the ecology of the Critically Endangered Sardinian long-eared bat to the impact of volcanic ash on the Barbados leaf-toed gecko, the theme highlights the importance of protecting island biodiversity, which is particularly vulnerable to extinction.

The lead article by Sanchez et al. reflect on the shrinking range of the Manapany day gecko *Phelsuma inexpectata* on Réunion Island. Our cover image features this strikingly coloured reptile, whose distribution has been newly mapped and whose survival is threatened by invasive species and urban expansion.

In the editorial, Jenny Daltry highlights islands as vital yet vulnerable biodiversity hotspots, where community-led conservation offers promising solutions to mounting ecological threats.

As well as Conservation News items on a range of topics, our Briefly section shines a spotlight on recent developments in island conservation. Discover more about the issue's content, including our Editor's picks, below:

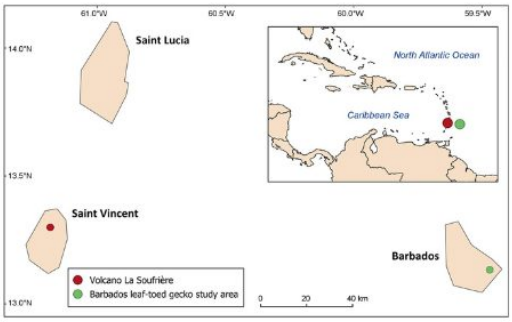
Editor's picks

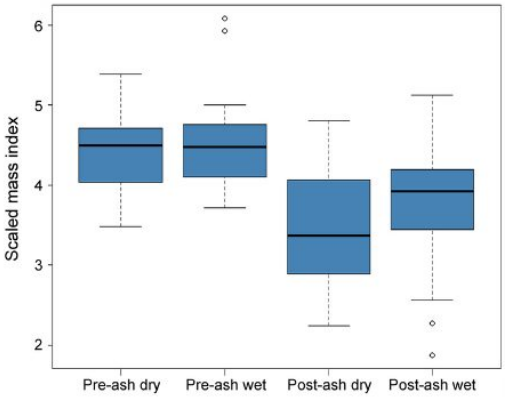
- The impact of a volcanic ash fall event on the Critically Endangered Barbados leaf-toed gecko *Phyllodactylus pulcher* – *Blades & Bosquet*
- Tiny habitats of tiny species: the importance of micro-refugia for threatened island-endemic arthropods – *Sharp & Gray*
- Digital trophies: using social media to assess wildlife crime in Lebanon – *Raine et al.*
- Tigers on thin ice: traffic mortality incidents and Amur tiger conservation in the Russian Far East – *Oleynikov et al.*

The Manapany day gecko *Phelsuma inexpectata*. Sanchez et al.

Island conservation

- Current distribution of *Phelsuma inexpectata*, a threatened Réunion Island endemic gecko – *Sanchez et al.*
- The impact of a volcanic ash fall event on the Critically Endangered Barbados leaf-toed gecko *Phyllodactylus pulcher* – *Blades & Bosquet*
- Are tropical oceanic islands overlooked? Knowledge gaps regarding the vulnerability of amphibians to global anthropogenic threats – *Auguste et al.*
- Tiny habitats of tiny species: the importance of micro-refugia for threatened island-endemic arthropods – *Sharp & Gray*
- A multi-scale approach unveils the ecology of the Critically Endangered Sardinian long-eared bat – *Fichera et al.*
- An exploration of the impacts of COVID-19 on the work of conservation actors in Trinidad and Tobago – *Brown & Wishart Chu Foon*





Left: volcanic ash particles in the eye of a Barbados leaf-toed gecko *Phyllodactylus pulcher* (photo: Dennis Connor Blades). Right: The Caribbean islands of Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Barbados, showing the location of the volcano La Soufrière and the study area (top); box plot showing the median, interquartile range, total range and outliers of the scaled mass index, used as an index of body condition, of *P. pulcher* recorded during the wet and dry seasons before (pre-ash) and after (post-ash) the volcanic ash fallout event in April 2021 (bottom). Blades & Bosquet

Behind the cover

As Jenny Daltry notes in the editorial, islands hold a special place in conservation, both as crucibles of evolution and as living museums Despite covering just 6.7% of the land surface, these refuges hold at least 20% of global biodiversity and account for 50% of globally threatened species and 75% of extinctions recorded since 1500. This issue highlights a range of topics and challenges in island conservation, including an assessment of the past and present distribution of the Manapany day gecko *Phelsuma inexpectata* (pictured), endemic to Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean. Overall, its range has shrunk, although new areas of occurrence have been located, notably in urban environments. In addition to the pressures associated with intense human development (such as agriculture and urban expansion), this gecko is negatively affected by one of the major conservation challenges on islands, invasive species. At least 10% of its range has now been colonized by the highly competitive gold-dust day gecko *Phelsuma laticauda*, native to Madagascar. (Photograph © CREME Project – University of Réunion – UMR PVBMT)

Manapany day gecko *Phelsuma inexpectata*, endemic to Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean. Photo: © CREME Project – University of Réunion – UMR PVBMT).

Editorial

The big difference with small islands – Jenny Daltry

Islands play a critical role in global biodiversity, serving as evolutionary hotspots; yet they face disproportionate threats from invasive species, climate change and limited resources. Despite these challenges, islands offer unique opportunities for community-led conservation and ecosystem restoration, demonstrating that targeted efforts can yield rapid and inspiring results.

'Islands are microcosms of our planet and barometers of our future… As the crucibles and laboratories for conservation actions and adaptation, they can also show the way for the rest of the world.'

Briefly

Discover selected, bite-sized conservation stories and news from around the world, with a spotlight on island conservation.

Other content

- Online illegal wildlife trade in Indonesia: strengthening the regulatory framework and law enforcement – *Padang et al.*
- Tigers on thin ice: traffic mortality incidents and Amur tiger conservation in the Russian Far East – *Oleynikov et al.*

- A multi-scale, multivariate habitat selection model demonstrates high potential for the reintroduction of the clouded leopard Neofelis nebulosa to Taiwan – *Wang et al.*
- Digital trophies: using social media to assess wildlife crime in Lebanon – *Raine et al.*
- Camera trap-based estimates reveal spatial variability in African clawless otter population densities and behaviour – *Lewis et al.*
- Estimated baseline density of a spotted hyaena population in a post-war landscape – *Briers-Louw et al.*
- Hunting strategies, wild meat preferences and perceptions of wildlife conservation in Nagaland, India – *Longchar et al.*
- Human–elephant conflict in expanding Asian elephant range in east-central India: implications for conservation and management – *Natarajan et al.*
- A narrow endemic plant: evaluating population dynamics and conservation strategies – *Alvite et al.*

Photographic evidence of spotted hyaenas *Crocuta crocuta* affected by snaring in the wildlife management area Coutada 11. Briers-Louw et al.

Conservation news

- Challenges for giant otter conservation in the land of jaguars – *Leuchtenberger et al.*
- Bridging productivity and conservation: peatland native tree species plantation with arbuscular mycorrhizal innovation – *Adinugroho et al.*
- Reinstatement of the Anoline Lizard Specialist Group: a renewed commitment to conservation – *Thonis et al.*
- Khulan Conservation Day officially designated in Mongolia – *Buuveibaatar et al.*

- ZSL Biobank launches biological library for conservation researchers and educators – *Gibson et al.*
- Discovery of a previously unknown population of the Critically Endangered grey-shanked douc langur in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam – *Nguyen Van et al.*
- Building bridges for threatened primates in the Arc of Deforestation – *Abra et al.*
- Rediscovery after 100 years: first confirmed sighting of the Gombak bent-winged firefly in Kuala Lumpur – *Tan & Jusoh*
- New threat to the Critically Endangered white-bellied heron in Namdapha Tiger Reserve, India – *Maheswaran & Das*
- Rediscovery of the Critically Endangered *Sinocrassula techinensis* in Sichuan, China – *Gao et al.*

Giant otter group in Brazilian Pantanal. Photo: Caroline Leuchtenberger.

Adult female giant otter being preyed upon by a male jaguar in Porto Jofre, Northern Pantanal, Brazil. Photo: Lauren Price.

Cecilia Derrick

Cecilia joined the Oryx team in 2025, excited to support the dissemination of research that informs conservation action. Since completing a Biological Sciences MSci at University College London, Cecilia has worked in academic science publishing for various journals including the Nature Portfolio and the Natural History Museum's journals. Alongside her professional work, Cecilia has volunteered with several conservation charities, including the RSPB and the London Natural History Society.