

Request for Concept Notes for Field Research

ASIAN CARNIVORE RESEARCH & CONSERVATION PROJECTS STARTING IN 2028

OVERVIEW

Carnivores play a critical role within their respective ecosystems. In their position at (or near) the top of the food web, they often exert a regulatory role, either through direct predation or through behaviorally mediated trophic interactions. This low-density **keystone** role often calls attention to another important role, as conservation efforts may draw upon their charismatic **flagship** presence to represent an entire ecosystem in need of protection. Lastly, efforts to protect those at the top of the food web may also extend to other species that share that habitat as an **umbrella** role.

Asia is home to an incredible array of such charismatic species, including several members of the carnivore order that feed primarily on plants—specifically bamboo. Earthwatch, now **Earthwatch Expeditions by Nat Hab**, has supported research and data collection on many of these top-tier species throughout our 55-year history. In this new iteration of our time-tested model of citizen or participatory science, we seek to bring back long-term research and conservation-focused projects on Asian carnivores into our portfolio, with fieldwork beginning in 2028. We invite scientists to submit initial concept notes for research addressing under-supported carnivore research and conservation needs (see below) as part of our mission to connect people with science and inspire action for a sustainable planet.

PRIORITY ASIAN CARNIVORE RESEARCH AREAS

- Keystone species, apex predators & food-web dynamics
- Species reintroduction & rewilding
- Habitat/ecosystem restoration in national parks & other natural areas
- Climate impacts on wildlife, wildlife habitats & migration corridors
- Habitat connectivity & species range shifts
- Strategies to increase endangered species survival
- Human-wildlife coexistence & conflict mitigation
- Braided knowledge systems, incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), western science, & participatory engagement in conservation

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AND RESEARCH PROJECT CONTEXT

We are prioritizing support for scientists conducting research throughout Asia, including India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Borneo, and Japan. Priority will be given to research that:

- Addresses critical conservation challenges;
- Offers strong, authentic, and engaging field-based research opportunities for participants;
- Integrates the research strongly within local communities, engages stakeholders where possible, and involves local emerging or established scientists in the research;
- Can be implemented consistently within a field research expedition model with appropriate risk mitigation and safety protocols.

WHY APPLY

- **Advance your research** through a scalable, field-based model that expands scientific output and conservation impact.
- **Increase data collection capacity** by working with multiple field teams per year, without adding operational complexity.
- **Focus on scientific design, fieldwork, and analysis**, while Earthwatch Expeditions manages the majority of project logistics, including accommodations, meals, transportation, and the participant experience.
- **Broaden the impact of your work** by engaging citizen-scientist participants and community members in data collection.
- **Strengthen local capacity** for long-term environmental management and stewardship.

ABOUT EARTHWATCH

Earthwatch has been a pioneer and leader in the field of expeditionary participatory science since 1971, funding scientists in over 130 countries. Our model pairs researchers with citizen-scientist participants, advancing both conservation outcomes and public understanding of science. Projects we fund produce rigorous, relevant, and impactful science. Incorporating participants from the public into fieldwork broadens the impact of the research we fund by increasing their scientific awareness, understanding, and commitment to a conservation-minded, sustainable lifestyle.

In 2026, Earthwatch entered into a long-term licensing agreement with *Natural Habitat Adventures (Nat Hab)*, a conservation travel company whose values strongly aligned with our own. In this new iteration of the Earthwatch model, we will be known as **Earthwatch Expeditions by Nat Hab**. We will take direct responsibility for most project logistics (including accommodations, food, and transportation), freeing scientists to focus on leading field research and data collection.

FUNDING MODEL

- **Per-team field support model**, where research funding is generated through each expedition team and directly supports field execution and data collection.
- **Annual Amount:** Financial support ranges from USD \$20,000–\$80,000 (based on team size and participant numbers)
- **Duration:** Target of 5+ years, with long-term program development, annual review, and approval
- **Covers:** Field expenses during Earthwatch groups (equipment, permits, transport, field staff stipends). We will also cover food, accommodations, and transportation for scientists and field staff to research sites.
- **Excludes:** Salaries, tuition, overhead, capital equipment

ELIGIBILITY

- Holds a Ph.D. (or equivalent expertise) and affiliation with a recognized university, government, tribal agency, or science-focused NGO.
- Demonstrates capacity for long-term field research (5+ years preferred).
- Demonstrated and/or planned collaboration with local scientist(s) and/or community required.
- Prioritizes diverse representation and inclusion of research staff.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Include field-based, participatory research where recruited participants collect data;
- Host 6-10 teams per year (with typically 8–15 participants per team), with participants providing 2-5 days of research support/fieldwork per team;
- Include educational components connecting research to the global context and issues;
- Teams to be run in English;
- Prioritize sustainable local vendors and community partnerships;
- Share data with local stakeholders and, where possible, open datasets;
- Maintain at least one other source of financial or institutional support.

SELECTION PROCESS

- Scientific merit and alignment with the Earthwatch Expeditions by Nat Hab mission;
- Feasibility of the field model & participant involvement;
- Field safety paramount (including geographic location and research activities in the field);
- Conservation impacts and potential for measurable outcomes and outputs;
- PI qualifications and partnerships;
- Engagement of emerging or established scientists local to where the research takes place.

Selected concept notes will be invited to submit full proposals, including detailed methodology, budget, and safety plans.

How to Apply: To submit your concept note, please follow this link: [APPLY HERE](#)

For questions or more details, please email the [Director of Research](#) or call +1 303-222-3711