



TAKING FLIGHT

The Official Newsletter of Talarak Foundation Inc.

In this issue:

Negros Forest Park	- 2
Bayawan Nature Reserve	- 5
Community and Sustainability	- 9
African Swine Fever	- 11
Partners, Visitors, and Collaborations	- 14
Event Highlights	- 17

Looking back at 2024 *director's summary*

It has been a year of new heights and new beginnings for Talarak in 2024. As we look for sustainability within our team and projects, we are thankful to our partners and friends locally and internationally who give us the means to reach these targets. Whether this is through funding support, training and capacity building support, or sage advisory support, Talarak is growing with it all. This year we saw growth in some of our most threatened species at our Negros Forest Park and Bayawan Nature Reserve. But we also saw a growth in our public engagement opportunities, community conservation activities, and personal progress across the Talarak team. We are truly privileged to be able to reach these heights and make the impacts we have this year.

Not all of our progress was born from joy however, as some of the activities that dominated the Talarak calendar revolved around our old nemesis the African Swine Fever virus. We continue to fight this virus, partnering with national and international organizations for greater impact, but this year we also took the fight to a new island. After witnessing the impact of ASF on Mindoro and recognizing the threat to the endemic Mindoro warty pig, we launched the Mindoro Warty Pig Conservation Project (MWPCP). With support from Mindoro-based NGOs, government agencies, and international partners, we hope the MWPCP will help protect this precious species.



Negros Forest Park

Nature's Classroom

inspiring conservationists at NFP

The activities and workshops at Negros Forest Park this year brought us closer to you all while educating a new generation of conservationists on topics such as native herpetofauna, endemic biodiversity, and carnivorous plants. Among the highlights were our reptile awareness and biodiversity workshops, which showcased the new reptile enclosures and bioactive terraria introduced this year. We also held weekend workshops for people of all ages, focusing on the conservation of endemic and endangered species and exploring the diversity and ecological roles of carnivorous plants in collaboration with the Bacolod Carnivorous Plant Society. Engaging and educating with you all has been a joy, and we're excited to bring you even more workshops and presentations in 2025.

Shiella Mae Olimpos (left) and Glory Moralidad (right)



This year, we had the pleasure of welcoming botanist Shiella Mae Olimpos for a guided park walkthrough, and author Glory Moralidad, who shared insights from her book **The Perfect Tree** while emphasizing the importance of our endemic and endangered plant species. In September, we were thrilled to host author and biologist Vince Gicaraya, who brought his story **Flor Tirador** to life before introducing us to some of the park's fascinating endemic birds.



Educational activities at the Negros Forest Park



Dr. Vince reading Flor Tirador

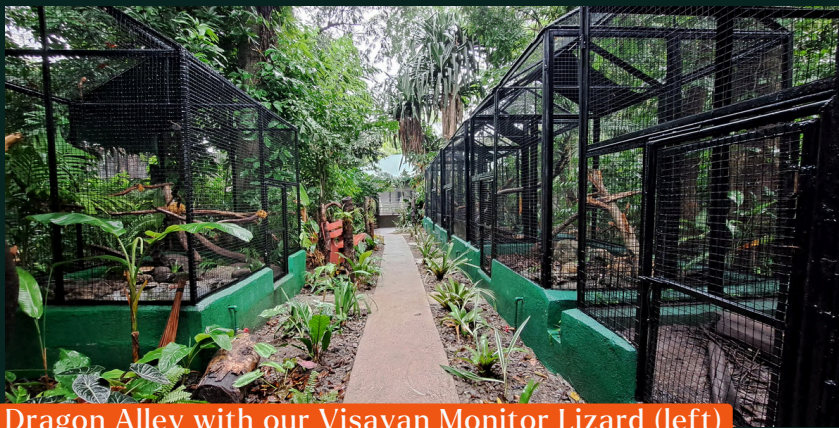




The Predator Palace and its venomous occupants

Dragon Alley & Predator Palace elevating animal welfare

One of our missions in Negros Forest Park is to maintain populations of threatened and endemic species to the West Visayas. In order to do this we need to keep our animals in the best possible welfare, and this means maintaining and renovating their enclosures frequently. This year we focused on building new enclosures for our reptiles in the park, with our **“Dragon Alley”** bringing shining new luxury enclosures to our monitor lizards and sailfin dragons, new enclosures for our giant pythons at the education center, and adding more bioactive terraria like our **“Predator Palace”** (built by our own **Kim Decena** and his terraria team) in the education center, to display our new Philippine temple vipers, Asian forest scorpion, and giant millipedes.



Dragon Alley with our Visayan Monitor Lizard (left) and Sailfin Dragon (right) on guard



Insights from our Endangered Species new research initiatives at NFP

A new addition to our Negros Forest Park staff and core objectives, is the development of an in-house research team. **Our research team**, made up of local biologist **Deolen** and research intern **Yobert**, focus on research to improve welfare for our animals, but also learn more about the lives of these endangered and often elusive species.

In 2024, our research team studied our Visayan warty pigs, Visayan spotted deer, and Visayan leopard cats. Our warty pigs were moved to new enclosures to provide high biosecurity and safety from the ASF virus, however this has meant that they are more isolated and under protective cover. Our research aims to identify how we can maintain the biosecurity measures to keep the pigs safe, but bring back the social connectivity and stimulation these pigs need for their mental welfare. Similarly, our team studied the behavior of our spotted deer to compare the differences between captive herds and the wild roaming deer at the Bayawan Nature Reserve. We aim to ensure that our captive deer develop the necessary social behaviors and feeding ecology to successfully readjust if released into the wild.



Camera trap footage of Visayan spotted deer feeding at NFP



Deolen setting cameras to spy on the warty pigs



Our research team is also working to reduce the number of animals entering captivity by focusing on the rehabilitation of orphaned Visayan leopard cat kittens. These kittens are often found in sugarcane fields and brought to the park or local authorities, unknowingly separated from their parents. In collaboration with the GMA show **Born to Be Wild**, we highlighted the dangers of removing kittens from these semi-wild areas, as they need to learn survival skills from their parents. Through our new research project, we aim to continue our education efforts and successfully return these orphaned cats to their natural habitats.

Abandoned Visayan leopard cat kittens featured on Born to Be Wild



Family to fawn over... dinner time for our spotted deer family

A Flourishing Future celebrating new generations

The animals of Negros Forest Park continue to thrive, and 2024 has been a remarkable year for our breeding programs. All of our Big 5 species saw success, including our celebrated new spotted deer, Willow, who was adopted by a new local sponsor, Blackbough Swim. However, our biggest highlight was **the boom in rufous-headed hornbills**. Since our first breeding success in 2019, we have typically raised one or two chicks per year, but in 2024, three hornbills successfully fledged from two pairs. This milestone brings us closer to establishing a stronger, more diverse breeding program that can help secure the future of this Critically Endangered species.



A full house of rufous-headed hornbills



Bayawan Nature Reserve

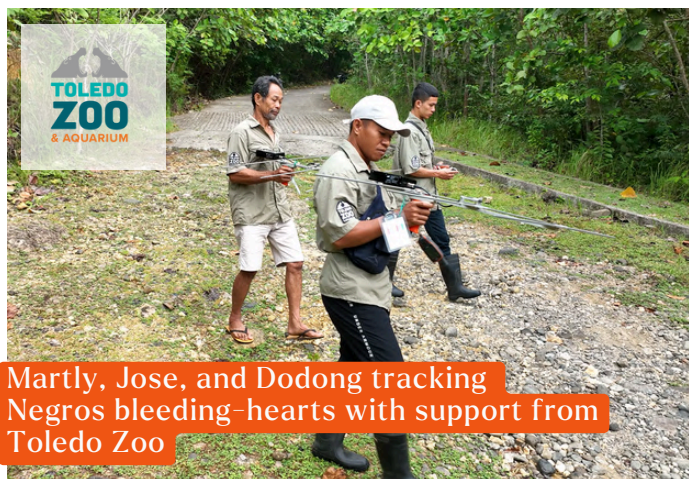
Rewarding Rewilding *watching our wildlife bloom*

Our on-site research team continues to study the released animals, native biodiversity, and habitat impacts, within the reserve and surrounding areas. With the support of **Synchronicity Earth, Mandai Nature, Toledo Zoo, ZGAP** (Zoologischen Gesellschaft für Arten und Populationsschutz e.V), and many of our sponsors and donors, we are able to use a pool of local staff and interns to monitor the changes in our biodiversity and habitat structures. The wildlife in and around the Bayawan Nature Reserve is flourishing as we are blessed to see new wild-born individuals from the captive-released spotted deer, warty pigs, and Visayan hornbills. We are so proud that these released groups are now becoming established wild populations within the reserve.

Visayan spotted deer and her fawn caught on a camera trap



Male Visayan hornbill tending to his nest



Martly, Jose, and Dodong tracking Negros bleeding-hearts with support from Toledo Zoo

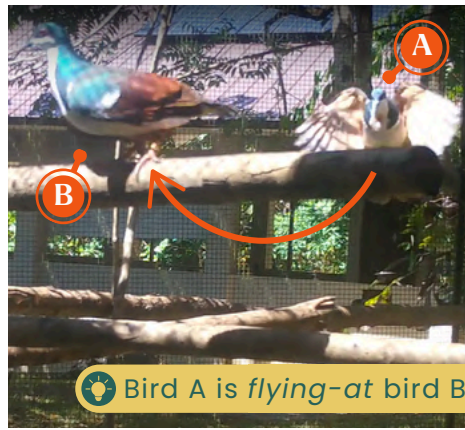


A released Negros bleeding-heart dove outside the soft release aviary

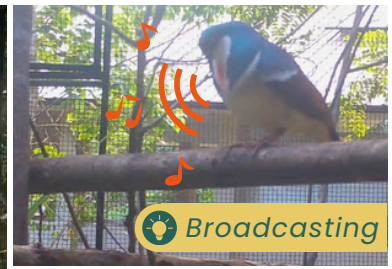
One released group that we are delighted to see succeed is our Negros bleeding-heart doves, a Critically Endangered species which is almost impossible to find in its namesake island of Negros. These doves have been in the Bayawan Nature Reserve since 2022, thanks to primary funding and advisory support from **Toledo Zoo**. This year, we are thrilled to see that a group of 9 of our free-flying doves appears to be settling in the reserve. The bleeding-hearts have previously had a hard time adjusting to the presence of natural predators, especially rats, but tracking data and camera trap footage from our research team indicate that they are successfully adjusting to the open secondary forests of the reserve. We are also witnessing their intricate social and ecological behaviors. Our next goal is to see these doves form pairs and breed, marking the first wild-born bleeding-heart doves from captive-released individuals in our reserve. Let's see what 2025 has in store, perhaps this dream will become a reality.



Data collection with Armie (left) and Chen (right)



Bird A is flying-at bird B



Broadcasting



Chest display

Social behaviors on display for all to see and hear

What's Up Warty's picturing piggy preferences

Earlier this year, the Bayawan Nature Reserve hosted a young Filipina researcher, **Chenalin De Los Santos**, who conducted a study on the Visayan warty pigs within the reserve. Supported by the **Rufford Small Grant**, Chenalin's research aimed to identify which habitat features in the reserve significantly influence the warty pigs' tendency to occupy or avoid certain areas. We hope that the findings from this study will shed light on the pigs' habitat needs, helping us create a safe haven within the reserve and encouraging landowners and natural area managers to support the pigs' habitat requirements.



Chen's camera catching wild warty pigs



Love for the Dove what makes the bleeding-heart tick

In an effort to better understand our Negros bleeding-heart doves and improve their chances of survival in the Bayawan Nature Reserve, we have been studying our captive birds at the reserve. One of our interns-turned-researcher, **Spencer Smith**, conducted several observational studies on groups of bleeding hearts in all-male, all-female, and mixed-sex aviaries. Spencer was particularly interested in observing the social interactions between individuals within the groups, as well as examining whether individual personalities influenced their space use, perching locations, and other natural behaviors that could impact their survival and breeding success. This study will help us understand behavioral differences and how they affect the animals after release into the reserve, potentially identifying specific traits that could help determine whether an individual is "suitable" or "unsuitable" for release. We are grateful to the **Bristol Zoological Society** for supporting Spencer and this important research, which will help us prepare for this Critically Endangered species to reclaim their home island of Negros.



Spencer and his forest hide to observe the bleeding-hearts in secrecy



All about the Birds *cataloguing a community*

Another research project we launched this year focused on investigating the impact of our reforestation efforts on the bird communities within the nature reserve. While the Bayawan Nature Reserve is a secondary forest, we have recorded more than 50 bird species in the area over the past five years. Conducted by our researcher **Dylan McKenzie** and assistant **Angeliagh Faith Pios**, and supported by **the Oriental Bird Club**, this project divided the reserve into four habitat types, each with varying levels of disturbance and regeneration, and surveyed the bird communities within these habitats. The study is still ongoing and is expected to culminate in 2025, with recommendations on habitat features that either support or attract endemic or threatened species, as well as features to avoid that may be deterring native species.



Dylan (left) and Angeliagh (center, right) with some of the birds found in BNR



Joe and his Southern "Pinskers" Hawk Eagles with their BNR nest



Peeking on the Pinskers *a privileged look inside the nest*

A research project that began late in 2024 focused on observing the breeding behavior and ecology of a pair of Southern Hawk Eagles in the reserve. This species is elusive and endemic to the southern parts of the Visayas and Mindanao islands, so we are thrilled to have a pair nesting within our nature reserve. Our researcher **Joe Pepper** spent 10 hours a day observing the nest through a scope to record vital data on mating behaviors, egg laying and incubation, social interactions, and prey species selected during the breeding period. Unfortunately, while Joe was able to document several previously unknown behaviors between the male and female eagles, the nest was unsuccessful this year, and no chick was produced. However, we have now recorded the nest as active for two consecutive years, and we hope to continue observing it next year, building upon our current data with more valuable insights.

Incoming Interns *building conservation capacity*

In 2024, we had a full house of interns and students at the Bayawan Nature Reserve. We were pleased to see so many Filipino students and interns join our research team, as we use this facility to build capacity and develop the next generation of Philippine conservationists. But it wasn't just Filipino interns we hosted in 2024; we also had the pleasure of supporting and working with interns and students from Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Germany, and France. We hope that these individuals will take the skills and passion they gained with our team and contribute to the global network of conservation and environmental scientists.



Alex, Winnie, and Justin from Hong Kong universities

Interns involved at the Bayawan Nature Reserve



Angeliagh, Yobert, Carla and Jolo (from left to right)



Joe teaching how to track



James teaching about camera traps

BNR research team leading educational tours

Welcome To Camp DEER *journey into nature education*

In 2024, the nature reserve opened its doors to nature tourism, beginning to accept groups for day tours to experience the reserve and its endemic wildlife. We have been fortunate to welcome over 20 people to trial our tourism activities, but we've seen a significant increase in educational tourism, particularly for families and children. Throughout the year, we welcomed several school, family, and homeschool groups to explore our educational trails and participate in nature-based activities.

To further enhance our ability to educate children, families, and nature enthusiasts, we are expanding our education infrastructure and personnel through a project called Camp DEER (Danapa Environmental Education and Research).

Camp DEER will enable us to accommodate larger groups and offer multi-day educational camps that showcase the diverse wildlife of Negros, the science behind nature and environmental connections, and involve the local community to share their perceptions and historical knowledge of the area. Our trials have been very positive so far, with activities such as nature walks, biodiversity games, and natural craftwork, all engaging the groups we have hosted.



Dumaguete homeschool group after exploring the Bayawan Nature Reserve

For anyone interested in visiting the reserve for a day tour, bird watching, or education camps, just contact the Talarak Foundation via email or social media to enquire.



Community and Sustainability

Connecting with our Community

engaging, enquiring, and educating

Our dedicated outreach and education team in Bayawan has continued to work hard in local communities, gathering perceptions and feedback, educating people about the benefits of the environment, and identifying ways in which Talarak can support these communities. This year, the outreach team engaged with more than 450 people from households, village halls, and city markets to gather important feedback from key communities surrounding the nature reserve.



Our education team have been hard at work conducting educational workshops, to teach biosecurity and ASF mitigation to protect our communities pigs, as well as our own warty pigs.

The general feedback remains positive, with the majority of people happy to see our endemic wildlife returning to the area and restoring the lost environment of previous generations. While there is still concern about the potential impacts of these animals on agricultural practices, there is a growing trust that Talarak and our partners are working to find solutions that provide harmony between wildlife and landowners or farmers. Part of this change is evident when local farmers contact the Talarak outreach team when they experience conflicts with wild pigs or deer, rather than resorting to dangerous trapping or environmentally destructive methods to protect their land. We hope that our relationships with communities near and far will continue to improve, and that we can support those involved in wildlife conflict, ensuring that neither humans nor wildlife are negatively impacted.



Education team engaging with our community



Seeking Sustainability *supporting locals' livelihoods*

In addition to the education and outreach efforts based out of the Bayawan Nature Reserve, 2024 saw the development of a dedicated Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) for the communities around the reserve. This program is led by **Dr. Julia Tichit**, supported by **Deanne Nuique** (education team lead), **Angeline Estrada**, **Alfons Aguilar**, **Zaldy Bismar**, and our nature reserve manager **Justine Magbanua**. The goal of the program is to build capacity and create sustainable income for the communities surrounding the reserve.

The SLP has so far created one new enterprise, with banana chips becoming a livelihood option in which several women's groups are now involved, producing and selling more than 400 packs. Other enterprises being developed include coconut products (such as coconut oil, water, and coco peat), local coffee, and handwoven crafts. These initiatives are supported by a network of expert partners from the government, non-government, and business sectors, including the Bayawan City Government and Negros Oriental State University.

One of the main aims of the SLP is to support the transition of land-users and landowners to more wildlife-friendly practices that provide sustainable income generation. As part of this initiative, the SLP team has built a nursery and demo-farm on the grounds of the Bayawan Nature Reserve, where we demonstrate sustainable land cultivation and planting practices to volunteer landowners in the area. Landowners who are interested in cooperating receive support in acquiring diversified crop plants, including native trees and bamboo, to encourage further biodiversity at their sites, as well as bags of locally made vermicompost as sustainable and organic fertilizers for growing new products.

The goals of the SLP are to:



Create novel livelihood opportunities for community groups



Work with landowners and land-users on developing sustainable land-use practices



Identify opportunities for capacity building and development in the communities and individuals around the nature reserve for personal and financial progress.



Our SLP team with Dr Julia (center) after a successful banana chip demonstration



The finished product

BNR Banana Chips



Local land-users learning about soil health and organic farming practices



African Swine Fever

Unfortunately, the plight of the African Swine Fever (ASF) virus continues to plague Negros and the rest of the Philippines. Sadly, 2024 also saw this virus take hold on one of the previously unaffected islands, prompting further conservation emergency meetings and actions to try and save one of the Philippines' endemic pig species. While this virus appears here to stay, and the hopes for vaccines or cures remain distant dreams, we have seen some progress in the collaborative efforts between the government and NGOs to protect our endemic pig species across the country.

Moving to Mindoro *a new warty, same problem*

The ASF virus has continued its relentless spread in the Philippines, now reaching the previously protected island of Mindoro. Mindoro Island is home to several endemic species across its two provinces and central forested mountain range, with the Mindoro warty pig (*Sus oliveri*) being one of them. The Philippine conservation community and international pig specialists have long been concerned about the impact of ASF on the country's endemic pigs; however, the Mindoro warty pig is especially vulnerable. This species is poorly understood, with confirmed footage and population assessments severely lacking on Mindoro Island. It is also the only endemic Philippine pig without a captive population that can be used as an insurance or protected population.



Mindoro warty pigs caught on camera from D'ABOVILLE Foundation



Matt facilitating a workshop for Mindoro warty pig conservation planning

As ASF hit the island, a combination of Talarak, Mindoro based NGO's **D'ABOVILLE Foundation and Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc.**, the **University of Philippines Los Baños**, Local and Regional govt. including **Department of Environment and Natural Resources** offices (including the **Tamaraw Conservation Project**), and the **IUCN Wild Pig Specialist Group**, gathered to assess the situation and urgently develop conservation strategies. After initial online meetings and workshops, several site assessments and on-island workshops were held to discuss the options for immediate conservation actions.



Dr. Monica leading a group activity at the Mindoro warty pig conservation planning workshop

These workshops resulted in the prioritization of establishing an on-island conservation holding and breeding center for the Mindoro warty pig. By the end of 2024, we are pleased to announce that two suitable sites have been identified and are in the process of developing the aforementioned conservation centers. One site is located near a city environment office seedling production area at Paluan municipality in the north of the island, close to the Mt Calavite Wildlife Sanctuary and its warty pig population. The second site is being developed in collaboration with an academic institution to create a dedicated conservation center for the pigs and other Mindoro wildlife. The construction of the first site is scheduled for mid-2025, with a sense of urgency among all stakeholders to erect and populate the facility before it is too late. Fortunately, the **Foundation University** of Dumaguete City on Negros Island has volunteered to assist with the design of this important center, and funding partners **ZGAP** in Germany are once again at the forefront of supporting this project.



Concept design of the conservation center and the Paluan LGU supporting its establishment

These activities in Mindoro are being carried out through collaborative efforts, led by Talarak's newly formed division, the **Mindoro Warty Pig Conservation Project (MWPCP)**. This initiative is currently spearheading the conservation activities for the Mindoro warty pig, funded entirely by Talarak's long-term German partner, **ZGAP**. It is currently supported by one dedicated staff member, **Mr. Kristoffer Noriel Ordoñez**, who serves as the project coordinator for the MWPCP. Kristoffer's responsibilities include overseeing the construction and development of the Mindoro warty pig conservation centers, as well as working with local stakeholders, including indigenous communities and regional governments. Together, we hope to develop on-island ASF mitigation measures, conduct warty pig population assessments, and cooperate in the protection of this vulnerable endemic species.



Kristoffer ("Tooper") and his efforts to engage stakeholders to build the conservation center



A Regional Response

ASF across SEA

Talarak's involvement in ASF mitigation and action planning extended beyond the Philippines in 2024. At the beginning of the year, the Talarak Foundation represented the Philippines alongside members of academia, government, and international organizations at a regional meeting for Southeast Asian countries, hosted in Pattaya, Thailand. This workshop, organized by the **UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, provided an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences across borders.



Talking ASF in Thailand with Dr Monica



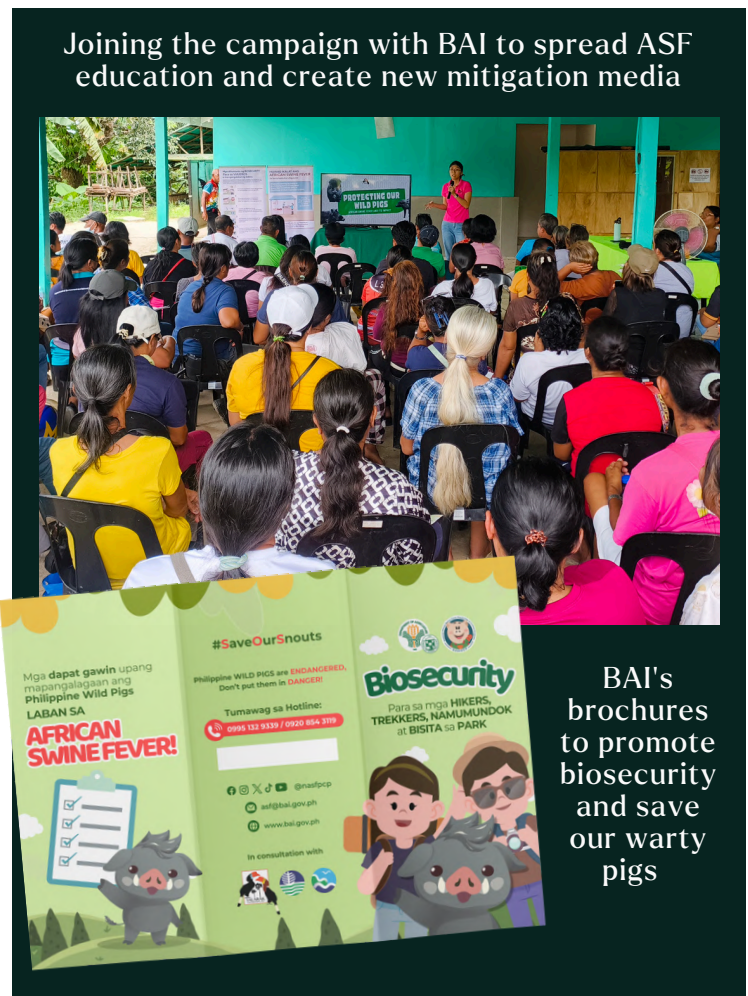
Discussing Babirusa at the SNAPP meeting in Sulawesi

Later in the year, Talarak was once again invited to join a regional workshop focused on developing ASF mitigation activities and investigating the impact of ASF on regionally endemic pig species. This workshop was hosted by the **Science of Nature and People Partnership (SNAPP)**, a network of regional experts representing Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The meeting was entirely dedicated to wild pig conservation concerns, as these countries are the only ones in Southeast Asia with endemic pig species.

Campaign Collaboration

save our snouts

Talarak has been active in ASF mitigation since it first arrived in Negros, posing a threat to our Visayan warty pigs. However, we have since expanded our involvement, taking on greater roles in the operation and monitoring of ASF and its impact on all wild pig species in the Philippines. In partnership with the national **Bureau of Animal Industries (BAI)**, ASF task force, and local and regional representatives from the environment and agriculture departments, we have hosted workshops and developed strategies for identifying, mitigating, and managing ASF outbreaks. This is particularly crucial, as much of the current ASF mitigation focus has been centered around domestic pigs and the pork industry, leaving biosecurity measures and wildlife protection needs unaddressed. Talarak's activities with the BAI this year included several government workshops, community meetings in Palawan, Mindoro, Panay, and Luzon islands, and the creation of new ASF media specifically aimed at protecting the Philippines' endemic wild pig species.



Joining the campaign with BAI to spread ASF education and create new mitigation media

BAI's brochures to promote biosecurity and save our warty pigs

Partners, Visitors, and Collaborations

Friends from Afar *a global conservation community*

We were fortunate in 2024 to welcome partners from across the world to our Negros Forest Park and Bayawan Nature Reserve sites.

Following an event in February, we hosted our Czech colleagues from **Tomas Bata University and Liberec Zoo** at the Bayawan Nature Reserve to witness our conservation activities and research. Alongside our longstanding friend and professor from Tomas Bata University, Dr. Matyas Adam, several students joined us for capacity-building internships and to collect data for their individual projects.

In addition to Liberec Zoo, we also welcomed representatives from **Bristol Zoological Society (BZS), Toledo Zoo, and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL)** to our Talarak sites in 2024. We are always pleased to host zoo partners and friends from around the world, as it provides valuable opportunities to learn and enhance our conservation efforts.



A trip to Twin Lakes with Matt (top left), Matyas (top right) and the teams from Zoo Liberec and Zoo Olomouc (below)



VIP visitors Danielle of ZSL (left) and Sarah of BZS (right)



Talarak on TV

expanding our audience with mainstream media

It's not just zoologists and conservationists who visit Talarak; 2024 also saw an increase in attention and visits from global media. We are excited to have the opportunity to showcase our conservation work and endemic species through written, digital, and television media, with 2024 bringing examples of all these formats. Our executive director, **Matt Ward**, was interviewed for a magazine article by **ABS-CBN**, which focused on the conservation challenges and successes related to Philippine hornbills. Additionally, our teams at the Negros Forest Park and Bayawan Nature Reserve collaborated with the national documentary show **Born To Be Wild from GMA Network** on multiple videos highlighting Visayan species conservation and wildlife education.



Born To Be Wild visiting Talarak to talk conservation and endemic wildlife



Finally, Talarak had the privilege of hosting and supporting an international documentary film crew, **Catkin Media** from Germany. Catkin Media was interested in filming many of the endemic and charismatic species that Talarak works with on Negros, as well as other Philippine endemic species, for a multi-part documentary series set to be released in 2026. We have greatly enjoyed sharing our work and showcasing these species with the media outlets mentioned above and many more. We remain committed to championing West Visayan wildlife conservation as a core mission of Talarak.



Catkin Media getting creative to capture our elusive endemic species

Conservation Collaborations


support from store sales to school halls

To achieve our conservation goals, we recognize that collaboration and partnerships are essential for supporting our activities and extending our reach. In 2024, we reached out for new partnerships and were happy to find many organizations receptive to our needs.

We are fortunate to have numerous dedicated zoos and conservation groups worldwide that provide both financial and expert support to our projects every year.

Support isn't limited to zoological organizations. In 2024, businesses such as **Blackbough Swim PH, Wodd PH, and Coastal Grounds Coffee** generously donated and collaborated with Talarak to raise conservation awareness. We are incredibly grateful for the backing of these Philippine businesses, who have become true champions for our country's endemic and threatened wildlife.

At the heart of Talarak's sustainability efforts is our conservation capacity-building program, which aims to cultivate a generation of knowledgeable, passionate, and skilled conservationists for the Philippines and beyond. Our research teams collaborate with many universities in the Philippines and internationally to conduct studies that enhance both our understanding and conservation capabilities for endemic species. These partnerships also provide students with opportunities to pursue undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees while helping universities meet academic requirements. Currently, Talarak has partnerships with more than **7 Philippine universities and 5 international universities**, and we are always seeking more.



The advertisement features a pair of wooden sunglasses at the top with the brand name 'wodd.' and the tagline 'BAMBOO AND WOODEN SUNGLASSES'. Below this is a graphic for 'COASTAL GROUNDS COFFEE HOUSE • EST. 2023' featuring two ducks and floral patterns. To the right, a woman is shown wearing a white t-shirt with a spotted deer design. Text next to her reads: 'Blackbough swim created the Bambi's Ballet Collection to raise funds and awareness for the Visayan spotted deer'. At the bottom left of the woman's image is a logo consisting of a stylized 'B' with a sun and a palm tree.



Matt and Emilio visit Manila universities, University of the Philippines Diliman (left), Ateneo de Manila (right), and University of Santo Tomas, to discuss collaboration opportunities for staff and students.

2024
**FOREST
FEST**

APRIL 18 to 20, 2024
AYALA MALLS CENTRIO, CAGAYAN DE ORO

APRIL 18 2024 1:00 PM

PHILIPPINE BIODIVERSITY NEEDS & SOLUTIONS

PANEL HOSTED BY TALARAK FOUNDATION



MATT WARD
MODERATOR



EMILIO TAN



RAUTISTA



A VERDIJO



SH DULALA

Event Highlights

EXHIBIT & FAIR

Experiential workshops, talks, and exhibitions showcasing initiatives promoting forest protection and conservation in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental.

GRANT & PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Attendees and participants with valuable opportunities to explore grant funding and partnership avenues provided by Forest Foundation Philippines.

FOREST IMPACT ACCELERATOR

A platform for social entrepreneurs to pitch innovative projects aimed at protecting forests and empowering forest communities.

Citizens to Scientists *the future... is citizen science*

In February 2024, the Talarak Foundation, in collaboration with **Tomas Bata University, Librec Zoo, Zoo Olomouc, the Global Biodiversity Conservation Conference, and the Bayawan City Government**, hosted the Citizen Science Symposium and Workshop. The aim of this event was to bring together citizen science experts, practitioners, and conservationists interested in utilizing citizen science for their conservation efforts. The workshop offered valuable learning opportunities, and, in partnership with Tomas Bata University and **Citizen Science Asia**, we are currently developing a guide to help Philippine institutions establish their own citizen science initiatives.



Citizen science symposia and workshoping in the Bayawan City Government conference room



Shipped to Singapore *progressing with peers*



Deanne engaging with her peers in Singapore

To support our internal capacity-building programs, we actively seek opportunities for our team to gain expert training, new insights, and experiences through partners or suitable development courses. In early 2024, two of our team members, **Spencer and Deanne**, attended a workshop in Singapore designed for early-career conservationists in the region. Supported by **Mandai Nature**, the **World Wildlife Day symposium and workshop** provided our team with an invaluable opportunity to connect, learn, and collaborate with other regional conservationists and experts, enhancing their skills and expanding their professional network.



Spencer, Deanne, and their young conservationist peers touring Bird Paradise

Building for the Future *growing from within*

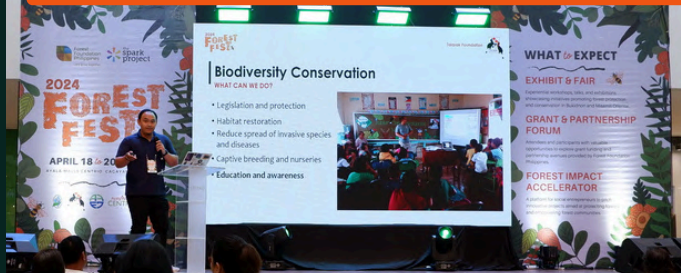
Talarak's capacity-building program also encourages staff, visiting researchers, and students to share their knowledge by offering training and learning opportunities for their peers. This includes specific training in key conservation skills, theoretical knowledge in conservation strategies, and seminars on individual research projects. After completing the **Durrell Endangered Species Management (DESMAN) course** in 2022 and 2023, **Dr. Monica and Justine** led a multi-day workshop for the Talarak research team, focusing on global conservation planning techniques. We are deeply grateful to the **Durrell Conservation Academy** for continuing to support our staff with scholarships to this prestigious and impactful course. The results are clear: our team has grown in confidence, skills, and leadership.



Internal workshops to build conservation skills within the Talarak team



Talarak team at Forest Fest, presenting, promoting, and participating for sustainability



Forest Fest 2024 *supporting sustainable communities*

As Talarak looks to expand our education and engagement activities nationwide, we participated in the **Forest Fest**, an environmental awareness and social enterprise event held in Cagayan de Oro. Forest Fest was designed to highlight the fragility of native wildlife and habitats while also emphasizing the importance of the environment for sustainable livelihoods, water, and food resources for local communities. The event celebrated indigenous communities and sustainable livelihoods through talks and displays, offering educational workshops and presentations to highlight local champions and conservation successes. The event culminated in a pitch competition, where local initiatives competed for capital support to create sustainable social enterprises. Talarak was involved in judging these pitches and, in turn, played a key role in mentoring the five winning enterprises as they piloted and developed their projects. It was a privilege for Talarak to be part of this event, which was led by **The Spark Project and Forest Foundation Philippines, and supported by Xavier Science Foundation.**

Talarak at the Big Leagues *raising our national profile*

Following our involvement in Forest Fest, we sought to deepen our support for sustainable social enterprises closer to home. Talarak's local partnerships manager, **Emilio Tan**, and our Outreach and SLP manager, **Deanne Nuique**, attended the **Social Enterprise Road Map conference** in Manila to learn from a range of experts and practitioners in the social enterprise sector across the Philippines. Our burgeoning Sustainable Livelihood Program is well-positioned to progress with new partners, providing the best possible support for our focal communities and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Bayawan Nature Reserve.



Talarak reached new heights in 2024, with our established reputation leading to invitations to regional academic meetings, an international bird fair, and national conservation planning workshops. Talarak staff members **Matt Ward, Emilio Tan, Ysabella Ward, and Justine Magbanua** represented the foundation at several major events throughout the year.

- Matt and Emilio participated in a **national conservation planning workshop** hosted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Biodiversity Management Bureau.
- Justine took part in a workshop focused on revisiting the **regional Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) classification**.
- Matt and Justine also attended the **regional BIOTA (Biology Teachers Association) event**, where they spoke on the topic of citizen science for conservation.
- Matt, Justine, Ysabella, and reserve researcher Dylan represented Talarak at the **Asian Bird Fair** in Manila, where they engaged with conservationists, tour operators, and the public to raise awareness for West Visayan bird conservation.

We are incredibly proud to participate in events at both the regional and national levels, being recognized as a key player in the Philippine conservation community and raising the profile of West Visayan species on a larger stage.



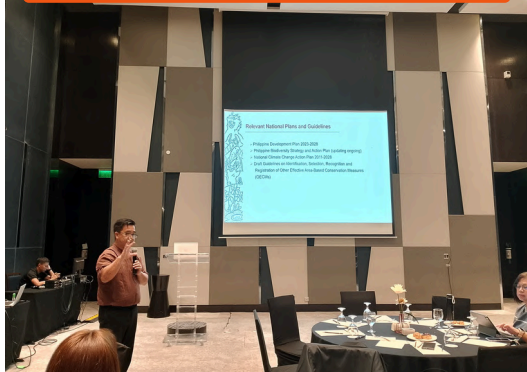
Conservation Planning Workshop



KBA Classification Workshop



2024 Asian Bird Fair



Partners & Donors

We could not have accomplished these successes without the invaluable cooperation of our partners and donors. A huge thank you to all of those who support Talarak Foundation!



Adopters

- Blackbough Swim
- Michal Kovar
- Cheta Chua
- Forest Camp Springs
- Mark Denny
- Jad Maza
- Wendy Gardner
- Stvenson G. Tupas
- Josette Wang
- Amado Jr Bajarias