



# MYANMAR: PRESERVING A PRICELESS NATURAL HERITAGE AND A WAY OF LIFE

*“Depletion of natural resources is occurring on a daily basis. **Local communities and organisations are ready to work together to protect irreplaceable indigenous peoples and restore degraded ecosystems.** Restoring an irreplaceable ecosystem by tackling the poverty of the majority of the community is also an important part of the national development strategy. **We request the governments of the world to provide natural resources along with the financial investment needed to combat ecosystem degradation and protect the natural world.**”*



**Thiri Dae We Aung, Myanmar Biodiversity & Nature Conservation Association, Myanmar**

Myanmar is home to a wealth of biodiversity, including large tracts of forest that harbour charismatic species such as the red panda and the Myanmar snub-nosed monkey, and coastal and marine ecosystems, such as coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds.

In stark contrast to the country’s biological riches, at least a third of its people currently live below the poverty line and the majority depend on natural resources for their survival. Fauna & Flora International has been supporting conservation work by local civil society organisations in Myanmar since 2008, and we were one of the first international conservation organisations on the ground as the country began to open up in 2011.

The largely intact lowland forest landscape of Tanintharyi region in southern Myanmar extends from the border of Thailand to coastal mangroves

and the Myeik Archipelago. Indigenous communities in these areas have a deep and long-held relationship with their ancestral lands. While these communities are heavily dependent on nature’s resources for food, fuel, fibre, water and medicine, the land is more than the services it provides – it is a way of life. Many traditional agricultural, artisanal fishing, forest management and cultural practices have evolved in harmony with nature and are based on a wealth of indigenous and local knowledge.

A key part of our work in Tanintharyi is supporting the expansion of community forest management and building local capacity in monitoring wildlife and the threats facing species locally. Community forestry and alternative fuelwood initiatives enable the sustainable management and conservation of important habitats within the landscape.