

Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society

Annual Report 2004

10th Anniversary Commemorative Issue

1995 - 2005



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Cover: a tear streak in an orphaned baby elephant
 Photograph by Gihan Chandrawansa

Vision:

"To help protect and conserve the diminishing biodiversity of Sri Lanka and to make the local and international community aware of its endangered status."

Mission:

"To enable communities to balance ecosystem protection and economic development by pioneering a model for sustainable conservation."

Philosophy:

"Realistic path to sustainable conservation in the long term can be achieved only by ensuring a reasonable standard of living for all people - especially for the marginalized rural people of developing countries who have access to some of the world's biologically rich areas. Community development and sustainable economic development must be ultimate goals that coincide with our biodiversity conservation and scientific research efforts. The education and sustainable economic development of rural communities is imperative for the co-existence of both wildlife and human beings over the long-term."

Humble Beginnings: Origins of SLWCS

Twenty-five centuries ago, Arahat Mahinda, a Buddhist monk and son of Emperor Ashoka of India told the King of Ceylon: "*O Great King, the birds of the air and the beasts have an equal right to live and move about in any part of the island as thou. The land belongs to the people and all other beings; thou art only the guardian of it.*" Acting on these words, King Devanampiya Tissa established the world's first wildlife sanctuary, named the Maha Meghawanaya, which means, the Great Raincloud Forest.

The Mahavamsa (The Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka)

The Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society (SLWCS) is the first organization to be established outside Sri Lanka for the sole purpose of helping to conserve and preserve the dwindling biodiversity of Sri Lanka. The society is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization based in the USA and is also a fully registered Voluntary Social Service Organization recognized by the Ministry of Social Services in Sri Lanka. The SLWCS is dedicated to the conservation and preservation of the important and endangered flora and fauna of Sri Lanka and the sustainability of their habitats on land and in the ocean.

The island of Sri Lanka is only the size of West Virginia and yet it is the sole remaining habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals. The main dangers to these life forms come from the destruction of their habitat. We are committed to conserving and preserving these plants and animals through scientifically based conservation efforts. These efforts include assessment of the current status of the many and diverse habitats, management plans for the biological preserves, and development of ecological awareness in Sri Lanka.

Several years ago, a confluence of circumstances brought a group of young biologists together in the New York City area. The discussions, field trips and readings of this group led us to an inescapable conclusion. To wit, the biological balance of this planet has been upset and presents a serious problem for future generations. Over the next few years, we became a small community of concerned people of many different backgrounds. As chance would have it, Sri Lanka was a place that in some ways bound this group together; as a homeland

for some, as a field site for others, and for all of us, a symbol of what an unspoiled tropical paradise should be.

Any realistic and responsible biologist understands that the downward spiral of our ecosystems is not a catastrophe that is likely to be felt by our generation. It is an evil inheritance that we leave for the future. Without immediate and progressive action, the losses that we experience now will echo down among generations.

It is not morally defensible to do nothing when faced with such realities. However, there are many great barriers to action. The most daunting is that there is nothing obvious that can be done that will make a difference. This is a very resilient and pernicious obstacle. However, it is a matter of perception, rather than reality.

We have decided to try to do something about the situation in a small country with huge needs. Any help that we can give, from wildlife census to field guide preparation, to posters on plummeting biodiversity will have a real impact on the situation in this small island nation. Where one or two people feel overwhelmed by a set of problems, an organization has a chance to make a difference.

We formed this society to tackle large and intractable problems and to build on the synergy of working with many other like-minded people. SLWCS is still a growing organization, but we can already see a difference in the awareness of this problem among the local communities where we have established projects. We hope that this effort can be expanded to the whole country.



British volunteer teaching English

Developing a New Paradigm for Sustainable Wildlife Conservation

Ravi Corea - President, SLWCS

The day I helplessly watched a chain of tipper trucks destroy the marshes bordering Nugegoda, the town where I grew up in Sri Lanka, is still vivid in my mind even after 30 years. This marsh is where I learned to watch birds, catch snakes and turtles, and teach myself how to observe wild animals patiently. And here it was, being engulfed in the name of DEVELOPMENT right before my eyes. Just as the marsh was being overtaken that day, I too was overtaken by the realization of how powerless and incapable I was in stopping this wanton destruction that was occurring in a place I cherished.

Although I was just 14 years old when these trucks erased the footsteps of my childhood in dirt and concrete, I made a vow that day which shaped the rest of my life. One day I vowed to be in a position in which I would be responsible for helping to protect and nourish vulnerable ecosystems and marginalized communities.

After years of frustration and disappointment with what I saw going on with the degradation of the environment, I realized that if I was to make a difference I, myself, had to put in the effort. The British orator, Edmund Burke once said, "Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little." So, I took an initiative in 1995 by establishing the National Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Society of Sri Lanka in the USA - to promote a New Paradigm for Wildlife Conservation in Sri Lanka.

In 1998 the society was renamed the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society. The launch was not simple by any means. Initially, I spoke of my intentions to two close friends. With their support and networking, I pulled in several more interested people to form a group of incorporators and began to establish the organization. For two years I worked vigorously to raise funds to meet the initial expenses of getting the organization incorporated and registered as a non-profit organization. The next challenge was to get the United States Internal Revenue Service 501c3 tax-exempt status to qualify for corporate and foundation grants and private donations. *My real awakening was to find out that people who really cared were not in a position to help financially, and the people who could help you financially really did not care enough!*

However much we strived, it seemed that we were always short of funds and could not establish the projects that we wanted to. Our breakthrough came in 1997 when we received two grants from the Wildlife Trust and the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund to establish a

community- based Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) resolution project. These grants were the result of a survey I had conducted to assess human-elephant conflict in Sri Lanka and the subsequent report I presented to the Center for Environmental Research & Conservation at the Columbia University where I was majoring in Conservation Biology. This was the initiation of the Saving Elephants by Helping People (SEHP) project, which became a landmark as well as a benchmark for HEC resolution in Sri Lanka. Since its inception in 1997, SEHP has received continuous funding support from the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, International Elephant Foundation and Sanjay Kumar, former CEO and President of Computer Associates International, Inc. Today the Department of Wildlife Conservation in their efforts to resolve HEC is applying management strategies developed for SEHP.



Ravi Corea advocates sustainable wildlife conservation in Sri Lanka

In 1997, the Department of Wildlife Conservation was approached to promote a management plan for the Bellanwila Attidiya marshes. To develop the proposal a local liaison and coordinator was needed to work with me. Chandeeep Corea was recommended to me by Jayantha Jayewardene. So unofficially, Chandeeep became the first staff member

of the fledgling organization.

Subsequently Chandeeep took over the management of the SEHP project. For nearly three years he managed a one-man operation in Sri Lanka until Amarasena Desaram became the second fulltime staff member to join the organization in 1999. Today both of them are still with the organization and are a living testimony by themselves to the trials, tribulations and successes of SLWCS. Presently we have 18 staff members, which include several national and international consultants. I must mention at this time the kind generosity of Chandeeep's parents, Chandra and Indira Corea, for allowing us to use their home as an office and for their support for which I thank them both.

In 2003, the SLWCS was registered as a Voluntary Social Service Organization with the Ministry of Social Services in Sri Lanka. Mr. Ariyaratne Hewage and Mr. Sumantha Fernando came on board as two new directors. Their input has been invaluable to the society, especially to become a



structurally viable organization. The end of 2003 was also a turning point for the Society where it found itself at the lowest it has ever been financially. With the timely intervention and financial support of international board member, Dr. Natarajan Ishwaran, it was possible for SLWCS to keep itself afloat. Fortunately for the Society, the beginning of 2004 was a pivotal period and it was possible for an organization that was literally heading for bankruptcy to make a remarkable recovery. This recovery was possible due to the financial support we received from our major benefactors.

Since its humble beginnings, the SLWCS has indeed come a long way and there is still a long and arduous journey ahead of us. Yet as of today the SLWCS has established two long-term community-based projects to resolve the human elephant conflict; has an ongoing survey of the Human Elephant Conflict in the Northwestern Province; an ongoing Elephant Ecology research project involving local stakeholders in the Central Province; a program to teach English to rural students; established partnerships with several international organizations such as Biosphere Expeditions, Travellers Worldwide, Global Vision International, Worldwide Experience, Earthwatch Institute and Commundo to send paying volunteers to make our projects economically sustainable.

Through innovative community development, wildlife conservation, research and sustainable development programs the SLWCS is developing an effective model for sustainable conservation in Sri Lanka. The society has also provided programs for MBA and MPA graduate students from the prestigious Columbia University in New York to fulfill their internship requirements.

Additionally the SLWCS was a member of the official committee appointed by the Department of Wildlife Conservation to conduct the first Post-Tsunami ecological assessment of the protected areas along the Southern coastline. The Nature Conservancy and the National Geographic Society provided the funds and technical support for the SLWCS to conduct this ecological assessment.

Presently the society is assisting in the Post-Tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts of the Department of Wildlife Conservation including building a Visitor Information Center for the Yala National Park in partnership with the Environmental Community Trust of England.

SLWCS also successfully obtained high definition ground and aerial footage of the Tsunami affected protected areas. The cameraman and equipment was provided by Discovery Channel and the helicopter was provided by Mr. Julian Davis, Managing Director of Yala Village Hotel. We are very thankful to Julian for his support. The footage will be used for the Visitor Center at Yala as well as a visual reference to assess the regeneration of the Tsunami-affected coastline from Bundala to Okanda. The Society with funding support from Abercrombie and Kent Global Foundation is also providing fishing boats, engines and fishing gear to Tsunami displaced fishermen in the Yala Handiya/Kariggiwela village and empowering a displaced widow by providing financial support for her to start a small business. We have also initiated a wetlands conservation

project with funding from the IUCN Netherlands Committee.

If there is an unofficial motto for SLWCS then it is "never let an opportunity go by that could make a difference." With an attitude like that it is no wonder that our future looks twice as busy with several new projects in various stages of development.



The biggest strength of SLWCS is the personnel who work for it. Their commitment and dedication to the organization as well as their belief that the SLWCS can make a difference in Sri Lanka keeps the organization moving forward. With their continued dedication, support and participation the SLWCS will no doubt reach further heights in the coming years. The villagers we work with are our biggest allies and partners. Without their support and participation we would never have been so successful in our conservation efforts.

We are also extremely grateful to the many organizations and individuals who have supported us financially and believed in the vision we have for sustainable wildlife conservation in Sri Lanka. It is mainly their support that helped us to achieve this milestone in our career. International organizations such as the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund, ASPCA, Computer Associates International Inc., US Fish & Wildlife Service, International Elephant Foundation, the Leo Model Foundation, UNESCO, United Nations Foundation, Travellers Conservation Foundation, the Abercrombie & Kent Global Foundation, the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation, the Born Free Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Cleveland Metro Park Zoo and the Alexander Abraham Foundation, and individuals such as Sanjay Kumar and Sir Arthur C. Clarke have given us grants to conduct our projects as well as to develop the Society. I must also thank the numerous people who have volunteered their time or have worked for us and made available their knowledge and expertise over the years to make our projects successful. I especially like to thank the former Member of Parliament and present Governor of the Central Province, the Honorable Monty Gopallawa for his unstinting support to SLWCS and its projects and also thank Dr. Lyn de Alwis, Jayantha Jayewardene and Dr. Charles Santiapillai for their advice and continuing support from even before the establishment of the SEHP project.

As Johann Von Goethe said that, "*The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred.*"

I would like to end with the following quote from the great Mahatma Gandhi, who said, "*Nature can take care of our needs, but not our greed.*" If we can get this simple message across then we have, indeed, made great progress in our conservation efforts. Though the victories of SLWCS are minor in comparison to the global environmental issues that need to be addressed, for the people and wildlife in our project sites they have made a world of change.

Importance of Public-Private Partnerships for Wildlife Conservation

Dayananda Kariyawasam – Director General, Department of Wildlife Conservation

In today's context wildlife conservation has moved from a purely protectionist method of conservation to a multidisciplinary science. At the same time the pressures on wildlife and natural ecosystems have increased exponentially due to human population growth and their need to survive. For conservationists as well as for conservation organizations what has become imperative is to balance environmental needs with the aspirations of mostly marginalized people who have access to some of the most biologically rich areas in the world. Whether we look at today's conservation needs on a global scale or at a national level the urgency to protect and manage the last wild places is dire. The final outcome of our collective efforts will not be measured by the number of scientific papers published, or by the amount of land



that were designated protected areas or the money spent on environmental issues. Rather the success of our efforts will be measured by how well we have been able to balance the needs of people while at the same time preserving nature.

It is very unlikely that in the coming decades any one organization, institution or individual will have the capacity to address all the issues pertaining to biodiversity conservation at the national or international level. Public-private partnerships will play an important role in spearheading innovative and progressive programs to achieve biodiversity conservation success in the future. Local community participation will play an even more important role in these efforts. Such an approach to conservation means that current policies in

administration and management will have to change too. But the reality is for government institutions change is especially slow however much there is an urgency to change. For private NGOs there is no such rigid institutional framework to abide by and they are in fact better positioned to respond to current needs faster and effectively and NGOs can also play a variety of roles ranging from leadership to support.

In this regard the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society has a good relationship with the Department and has strived to develop their projects in consultation with the Department to contribute to the ongoing national efforts of the Department. By integrating innovative concepts the SLWCS has pioneered community-based human-elephant conflict resolution projects in Sri Lanka. The SLWCS was also a member of the official committee appointed by the Department to conduct the first ever Post-Tsunami ecological assessment of the protected areas along the southern coastline. As a result of their effort the whole impact area was surveyed by air and mapped using GIS. Presently the Society has pledged assistance to the Post Tsunami reconstruction efforts of the Department by helping to build a Visitor Information Center for the Yala National Park. On their 10th Anniversary I take the opportunity to wish the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society all the very best and good luck in their future endeavors and look forward to their continued support in the coming years to conserve Sri Lanka's beautiful and unique natural resources.



Director General Dept of Wildlife Conservation Dayananda Kariyawasam at Yala National Park with members of the Tsunami Impact Assessment Team (TIAT)



Director Kariyawasam being interviewed by the National Public Radio of USA

Elephant Project Brings About Governance in Rural Development

Ariyaratne Hewage - Advisor, Ministry of Ports and Civil Aviation

With the introduction of the Colonization movement in 1940s, many neglected irrigation projects were restored which was followed by large scale opening up of jungles in the dry zone areas of the country. Most of these lands which were under cultivation during the ancient times had been abandoned for centuries thus heralding the decline of the prosperous hydraulic civilization of ancient Sri Lanka. When people were settled in newly opened up lands, the wildlife which had prevailed in an uninterrupted manner for centuries was significantly affected. This was mainly evident in the areas where elephant populations were concentrated. Although, the Government has set up wildlife national parks to provide specific areas for the wildlife and mainly for elephants, the carrying capacity of such parks were not adequate to keep the animals attracted to the parks. This resulted in wild animals leaving the boundaries of national parks and entering into the lands cultivated by the peasants.

Elephants in small herds entering into human habitations mainly during the seasons when food and water became scarce in the parks turned into a serious problem thus creating a human-elephant conflict.

This phenomenon not only resulted in the destruction of cultivation and houses but also in killing the people living in these areas. In retaliation people also began to kill the elephants through various means thus turning the conflict into a much worse situation.

The Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC) and several NGOs have identified the areas where the human-elephant conflict has become critical in the country. The area around Wasgamuwa National Park is such an area and there are several villages being severely affected by the 'conflict'.

Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society (SLWCS) a registered NGO commenced its field research activities in 1997 and identified the critical issues with regard to human-elephant conflict (HEC). SLWCS collected relevant information on the type and magnitude of damages caused by elephants on human life, property and cultivation and also the damage to the lives of elephants. In addition the Society identified the elephant movement patterns geographically and seasonally. SLWCS realized the need to have measures to reduce the conflict and commenced a massive educational programme among the communities living in the area. SLWCS then convinced the villagers that it would obtain support from external donors and established an electric fence with power provided by solar energy. By 2002 SLWCS was able to establish 20 kilometers of electric fencing.

Solar-powered electric fencing is not a new technique as the DWLC has established them around national parks to prevent elephants leaving the park boundaries. However, the fence introduced by SLWCS was the first of its kind which was established around the villages to protect them from

elephants. SLWCS succeeded in its efforts as villagers saw there was a direct benefit to them. The villagers organized themselves as community groups to protect and maintain the fence initially. SLWCS was able to convince the villagers about the importance of organizing as community groups not only to protect the fence but for broad community development at large.

This process eventually resulted in introducing programmes and practices to teach English to rural communities by visiting foreign volunteers and joint marketing of products etc. SLWCS was able to bring together other stakeholders centered around communities. Public officers at field and divisional levels, other local NGOs and experts, foreign NGOs and experts, private sector businessmen, transporters, religious groups and research institutions came and rallied round to achieve the common goal set by SLWCS. This process of activities was brought to the culmination by setting up a "system of good governance" practice in the project area.

As the UNDP describes "governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences, and exercise their legal rights and obligations. Good governance is among other things participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable and it

promotes the rule of law. Good governance assures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources." (UNDP 2002).

It could be observed that the Government agencies play a major role in most cases when community development projects are implemented. The conventional approach to governance is that "Government agencies initiate projects and then get civil society and private sector involved in the activities of such projects subsequently".

In the case of the SEHP project initiated by SLWCS which was aimed at reducing human – elephant conflict, improving quality of life of rural communities and protecting elephants the conventional approach to governance has been changed. Rather than a government agency initiating the project, it has been initiated by an NGO along with the community. Civil Society became the key and initial player of this project and consequently, other players such as government and private sector too had been involved.

The experience of SLWCS may be practiced in a few other projects as well to experiment for the replication of this model. I wish that SLWCS would develop this model through a 'learning process' and take steps to prove it as a successful model for project management.



Ari Hewage with village people in Wilgamuwa

Linking Human-Elephant Conflict to Ecotourism Opportunities

International Trustee, Dr. Natarajan Ishwaran

Director, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences - UNESCO, Paris, France

I have been fortunate to come into contact with the dedicated group of people who manage the affairs of the Sri Lankan Wildlife Conservation Society (SLWCS).

I met Ravi and Chandeepp Corea at the first-ever UN Summit on Ecotourism, convened in Quebec, Canada, in 2002. Ravi made an inspiring presentation on how SLWCS managed human-elephant conflict and linked such management efforts to developing eco-tourism opportunities in the same areas. His presentation attracted the attention of many Summit participants including myself.

Having worked on elephants for my masters degree and doctorate theses in Sri Lanka from 1975 to 1985, and continuing to maintain a keen interest on all aspects related to elephants, I decided to spend time promoting the work of SLWCS among international sponsors of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, with whom I interact as part of my day-to-day working life.

Globalization affects all walks of life; and biodiversity conservation is, more and more, an internationalized agenda. Hence, it is inevitable that non-governmental organizations like SLWCS develop strong links with a wide range of partners in all parts of the world in order to achieve their mission and goals.

I am happy to see that SLWCS is evolving into an organization that has the ability to link and network with professionals in international development

agencies like UNDP, specialized UN agencies such as UNESCO where I work, international conservation NGOs including The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Conservation International (CI), and a growing number of private sector groups; particularly those from the tourism sector who find SLWCS' eco-tourism initiatives appealing to develop partnerships that could improve services for their clients visiting Sri Lanka.

For me it has been a rewarding experience to work with Ravi, Chandeepp and others, to connect SLWCS internationally and contribute towards its mission of becoming an effective international NGO serving the cause of conserving Sri Lankan biodiversity.

I shall continue to support SLWCS to improve their organizational and human resource capacity to better serve the wildlife conservation needs and goals of Sri Lankan society.

I wish the SLWCS continuing growth and success.



Dr. Natarajan Ishwaran

How Conservation Goals Were Achieved in the Past

Dr. Lyn de Alwis

That the leopard became the symbol of the Wilpattu National Park by the nineteen sixties and seventies was no accident. Even as late as 1950, to sight a leopard in the Park, there had to be a combination of dry weather, a good selection of deer, sambhur, pig and buffalo with young calves to bring a leopard out into the open even in the fast falling darkness. Such was the fear and uncertainty in the mind of a leopard living in the so-called security of the Park.

When I became Director in 1965, I headed early for Wilpattu which to me was the most beautiful haven for animals anywhere in the world - its rolling sand-dunes, towering rockscapes, a miniature lake every 1 km, fringed with almost manicured green plains and finally breathtaking coastline. Bird life was plentiful and visitors were assured of beauty, excitement and jungle sounds well into the night.

Yet, there were less than 2000 visitors a year. Why? There were few roads that took visitors around, no lodges to encourage them to stay and poachers who moved around fearlessly on foot, bringing down spotted deer, wild boar, bear and the occasional leopard that ventured out into the open.

But I held the trumps - dedicated, fearless Rangers and guards who were always ready to do battle in order to save the lives of the animals in their charge. They would track armed gangs on foot, often lying in ambush to apprehend the intruder and bring them to book. There were no monetary rewards because the total annual allocation for the Department was just over Rs. 600,000. A ranger survived on a salary of Rs. 200 a month, of which Rs. 150 had to be sent to their homes.

We tried our best to get something more, uniforms, a hat, a raincoat, a bicycle but no sob story would persuade even the extra Rs. 50 to make staff feel they were doing a kind of national service. So we put our heads together and invented new sources of income. Senior Staff supported me in collecting money in what came to be known as a Wildlife Preservation Fund - we appealed to



Dr. Lyn de Alwis

Contd in page 17

From Nothing to Practical Conservation

Chandeep Corea - Operations Director, SLWCS

When I started working with the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society it didn't even exist. At that time it was called the National Wildlife & Biodiversity Conservation Society of Sri Lanka. Having recently returned from completing my degree in the United States and after working for a year with two long-term conservation/animal behavior projects in Sri Lanka, I had "left" conservation and started a website design company hoping to use this to fund my conservation work.

I was introduced to Ravi Corea (no relation!), by Jayantha Jayawardene and asked to work part-time on a plan to conserve the Bellanwilla-Attidiya marshes. This was SLWCS' first project in Sri Lanka and we were asked to be in a steering committee led by the Department of Wildlife Conservation to help in the conservation of this wetland. Although this project was put on hold for 7 years due to circumstances beyond our control while the marsh was swallowed up for housing development and as a garbage dumping ground we have been finally asked to complete a workable, holistic management and conservation plan for the DWC by end of 2005.

In 1997 Ravi was starting an innovative project to fence elephants "out" of areas rather than keep them "in" protected areas. I went on a field visit with him and subsequently offered to help manage the project, part-time. I started going up to Wasgamuwa in a borrowed 4WD and made sure that we were coordinating our activities with all parties concerned, especially the villagers.

At about the same time we conceptualized Elephant Walk Thru – a nature tourism project that offered a win-win-win solution to the problems of effective conservation, rural development, and developer profit. The project now appears as a case study in the prestigious Ivey publications.

Fortunately we always had an effective presence on the web and through this we established a number of contacts, which helped SLWCS to grow to become what it is today. Initially we established a long-term partnership to teach English with Travellers Worldwide. Following this we had a Masters graduate (Sharon Brooks) from England come to volunteer with us with the support of Chester Zoo. She helped us establish our innovative Field Scouts Project which trained and

2004 was truly an exceptional year for SLWCS. At the end of 2003 we had less than Rs. 50,000 in our bank accounts and we were wondering whom we could release, something we had never done before. 2004 was also an exceptional year for me personally in that I met my wife and the coastline of Sri Lanka was devastated by the Tsunami of December 26th.

subsequently continues to use local youth to carry out long term research. We have had a number of international volunteers come help setup and run our pioneering research, community development, and conservation programs. They have completed many projects including GIS Mapping, Biodiversity Surveying and Emergency Field Medical Training. Zeenath Khalid who now works as our Social Science Consultant initially came to us as a volunteer in 2003 to help us analyze the village attitudes towards the fences and nature-based tourism plans. She is now working on our North West Region GIS based HEC Study and the new Wetlands Study.

In 2003 we helped organize the International "Symposium for Human Elephant Relationships and Conflicts" where one innovative feature was the field visits to most of the elephant research projects around Sri Lanka.

Since 2003 our Wasgamuwa projects were visited and filmed by YATV Asia, Animal Planet (OSF, Australia), and Doc TV, Germany. Our Tsunami assessment was covered by National Public Radio, and National Geographic and filmed by Discovery Channel.

Now we have an office in Colombo, a field station in Wasgamuwa, 2 jeeps, a van, a number of laptop computers, digital cameras, GPS units, Microscopes, range finders, infrared cameras and even a Zodiac. What is truly exceptional in this is that in 2003 we had none of these things. 2004 ended with us having 18 staff members including international and national consultants spread

out on a number of projects in Sri Lanka.

The strength of SLWCS is that we are willing to take calculated risks in projects and have established a strong link with the Department of Wildlife Conservation and Forest Department by partnering with them in their conservation work. We have been invited by them to set up and manage conservation programs and they have adopted our methodology in their work as well.

Our greatest strength however is in the key ideal that we follow –which is that **we need to help local people who are the most affected by wildlife and who in turn most affect wildlife if we are to effectively conserve nature through research based conservation strategies.** We need to work "with" rather than "for" local people to effectively conserve our dwindling biodiversity.



Chandeep ponders the future for SLWCS



Managing a Community Based Research Project

Harsba Gammanpila - Field Project Manager

Human Elephant Conflict or HEC I had heard about this so many times in my student days and read many articles on the subject, but, like most of the readers I never knew what this meant in reality. Not until I joined SLWCS as a Project Manager at Wasgamuwa did I understand this issue.

One of the main problems with regard to conservation in Sri Lanka is the human elephant conflict, which can be seen in almost all the agricultural areas in the dry zone. From my school days I was involved in many different conservation activities and always wanted to participate in this kind of work. On the other hand, as a long-term career, I wanted a stable job.

When I was invited to join SLWCS as a Project Manager for Wasgamuwa by Ravi and Chandeeep, I had to make a firm decision as I knew the risks of working for an NGO. Especially with regard to job security this was a risk as I had a stable job and was a permanent employee of a reputed international market research organization.

After speaking to Ravi for the second time and given his assurances about job security, I decided that I could do something for the community and wildlife conservation by joining SLWCS.

My first impression on the job was that I need only to continue the tasks, which were earlier carried out by the SLWCS, and make sure about the quality of data. But after working a few days at Wasgamuwa I realized that there is much more to do.

In terms of research techniques and administration, this meant introducing other components to the research such as tank monitoring, the Grama Niladhari survey and introducing a proper format for data entry for data from elephant damage surveys and ecological studies.

Further, I was able to set up a proper management structure so that every field scout would be responsible for one task and hence all will have equal opportunity to develop their organizational and leadership qualities.



Harsha leading the Field Scouts

All these were possible because I was given the full freedom and authority to carry out these without any problem with the management.

I must thank SLWCS for this policy, as it has allowed me to use my academic knowledge and experience and also learn in a more practical way. When comparing notes with the other organizations I had worked for, I think the holistic approach that SLWCS is practising towards conservation is highly commendable.

We carry out English teaching programmes and various training programmes for the villagers. Especially because of the English teaching programme many children in the village now can converse well in English.

By introducing various components such as the GVI, BE and Volunteer Teachers, SLWCS is not only making the project economically sustainable but is also giving more international exposure to myself and the Field Scouts.

I wish SLWCS all the very best.



Field Scouts undergoing field training



Fields Scouts at the SHERC Symposium, Colombo Plaza, Sri Lanka, 2003

My Adventures with the SLWCS

Liz Smith - Consultant, USA

In the spring of 2003, serendipitous circumstances led me to the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society. It was while completing my Masters degree at Columbia University that I began working with SLWCS, first as an Intern for the Summer, then as a Consultant during my final year and now as a Supporter, Advocate, Web-Editor, etc. This good fortune has allowed me the pleasure of both working with and learning from the Society. The last two years have been filled with adventure, excitement, hard work, occasional failures, but most of all a wonderful learning experience displaying the value of never ceasing to fight for what you believe in.

I realized the moment I first learned about SLWCS that this organization was something special. I went to Columbia University to complete a Masters degree in Conservation Policy – a combination of economics, law and environmental policy. This take-off on the traditional environmental degree did not exist, but I was able to convince the administration that environmental problems would only be solved if we were examining the issues from all angles. Enter Ravi and his pioneering model for Conservation: approaching community development, economic development, human elephant conflict and other wildlife conservation issues simultaneously. I had finally met a leader in the field who was looking at the whole playing field AND creating solutions!

Anyone who meets Ravi can sense his enthusiasm for the work he does. Working with the Society, you quickly realize there is not always a set agenda and when a new opportunity opens – you do everything possible to make it happen. Some of the work that I did was to create publication pieces to help bring more awareness to the organization, collaborate on grant writing with others from the Columbia University community, and identify new ways to make the organization run more efficiently.

All of these things, combined with Ravi's exuberance taught me about the history, culture and incredible beauty of this tiny island nation - a trip to Sri Lanka became imminent.

In spring 2004 I made my first (of what I hope to be many) trips to Sri Lanka. Traveling the country, visiting the places I had read about and meeting the other people involved in keeping the mission alive was amazing. I was able to visit the office and meet Chandeeep, who truly keeps the wheels of the organization turning. Then from my visit to the field house in Wasgamuwa, watching the sunrise over the vast landscape to a night in the SLWCS tree hut monitoring elephant movements around the village; my research hunting for new grants

became so much more relevant, because I was able to witness the effects of the projects firsthand.

Now back in New York I love to read Harsha's field reports about the day-to-day activities and highlights of new research. Since meeting some of the field scouts, such as Maduranga & Thushara, the stories resonate with me and I know that SLWCS is not just an organization, but also a group of dedicated people who support each other and the mission of the organization. It is these

people who work tirelessly and who give so much of themselves. This is what I have taken away from my experiences with SLWCS:

- *Be willing to jump in with both feet even when the odds are against you.*
- *Dedication can bring about changes that will help many different parties live more fully.*
- *Never say 'I can't', no matter what obstacles are thrown before you.*

It is for these reasons I know SLWCS will continue to move forward and establish itself as a leader in the international conservation community. On a personal note, I hope to stay along for the ride, contributing in whatever manner possible.



Liz Smith atop the Elephant Watch Hut



**Alexander
Abraham
Foundation**

From the Surreal to Real

Zeenath Khalid - Social Science Consultant, Pakistan

SLWCS has been for me both, a real and a very surreal experience. I came to know of the organization at a point where I was in search of ways to integrate my personal interests with my academic qualifications. Having a background in social sciences my experiences in the past were largely in the development sector within which my specific areas of interest were grass-root initiatives and participatory research. However, my long standing passion for animals was not always met by the nature of the work I had been involved with. For me, SLWCS has been that 'window of opportunity' that created the perfect scenario of combining my profession with my fervor for wildlife.

assessment of existing efforts to mitigate HEC in order to develop better community based management strategies for the NWR through participatory research methodologies". This time round I was living yet another adventure, from evenings in tree-huts to walks in forests accompanied by tales of wonder and awe as farmers would sit and entertain us with their encounters of wild elephants.

My exchanges with SLWCS have increased over the last years. During this time the organization has grown and developed into a unique and unconventional hub of activity for new and exciting projects. The achievements of SLWCS are commendable given their small set-up which is accredited greatly to the relentless effort and dedication of Mr. Ravi Corea (President), who continues to be the driving force behind much of the work, an admirably simple, enthusiastic and affable human being.

SLWCS is the perfect base for self-motivated people. It offers room for independence and creativity trimmed with a friendly and informal environment. This flexibility is what adds appreciably to the flavor of working for them. Obviously the rapidly growing projects and people have also furthered their challenges of creating a more institutionalized environment, aspects they are currently working on.

Today I am glad to say that all my short exchanges with them has led to a longer term contract during which I look forward to many more escapades while contributing positively to the cause of conservation integrated with community development for the country.



Zeenath and Nishantha conducting a social survey

Having first been associated with them in 2003 was the beginning of my adventures when I ended up staying three months in the wilds of Wasgamuwa doing socio-economic research on two of their projects. At the time I had no idea that bathing in water tanks, elephants and bird sightings, endless bike rides and the warm-heartedness of the local people were all going to be unexpected pleasures of a normal days work! The wealth of experience I was able to accumulate in that short period of time revealed to me the admirable efforts of this organization allowing people such an up, close and personal interaction with both man and nature. It was a memorable time both in terms of the work and the tranquility of the environment I lived in.

Following this experience I went back to Pakistan from where I corresponded with them regularly and informally contributed to some of their research initiatives that led to another exciting prospect. I was asked to come down again to conduct a rapid survey on issues related to Human Elephant Conflict (HEC) in the country's North West Region (NWR). The main objective being to obtain data on HEC and carry out an



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Building Bridges - Interning for the SLWCS

Nicole Sebastian - Program Officer, The Robinhood Foundation

"I'm passing around the list of organizations that you have the opportunity to work with this semester. Read through the descriptions and then sign up for your first choice". At the time, I was getting a Master's degree in Public Administration at Columbia University, and this is what our non-profit management professor said to our class. This was the day we got to select a client in real time; an opportunity to apply the skills we had thus far acquired in the classroom to a veritable need.

As I read through the list, one organization jumped out at me immediately. The organization's mission was appealing, and I was also impressed by the enormity of the work being taken on largely by one individual. This meant there would be an opportunity to really get involved and make an impact. I signed up to work with the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society (SLWCS), and was even more delighted when some of my most respected peers were also drawn to the organization and signed up.



SIPA interns: standing L to R: Jennifer Rupnik, Michele Haberland, Liz Smith, Rebeca Sievers, Susanna Prough. Seated L to R: Nicole Sebastian, Ravi Coreia, Julie Poll, Alison Trachtman.

We set up an exploratory meeting with Ravi Coreia, the Executive Director, to learn more about SLWCS and figure out how we could be of help. To this day I distinctly remember the moment we first met him. We had secured an office at Columbia after classes one evening, and as our group gathered around the table preparing for the meeting, he sauntered into the room with a backpack slung over his shoulder.

During that first meeting, Ravi acquainted us with the work of conserving and preserving the dwindling biodiversity of Sri Lanka, the challenges of the human-elephant conflict and all of the implications affiliated with it. In fact, Ravi continued to be our teacher and helped us to better understand Sri Lanka throughout the duration of the project. Most impressive was the fact that he was doing the work of SLWCS out of the backpack he had with him. He was a one-man operation in the U.S. who had dedicated himself to this cause, all while being a full time student! His tireless efforts in raising awareness, financing, and securing other kinds of support, combined with his warmth and ability to draw people to this cause, have all had a positive impact on the activities of SLWCS in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the breadth and depth of what SLWCS does for the local communities as well as the environment on a large scale are unparalleled.

That semester our group put together a sustainability plan for the U.S. operation of the organization. The more we learned of Sri Lanka, and the more we learned about the activities of SLWCS, the more personal this project became. While none of us had ever been to Sri Lanka, Ravi brought us to that world through pictures, stories and by introducing us to others involved with SLWCS. We became a part of that circle, and saw firsthand how Ravi and others committed to this cause have successfully overcome challenges normally associated with non-profit organizations. The semester came to an end and our group completed the sustainability plan, but this just marked the beginning of an ongoing relationship.

When the tsunami hit Sri Lanka in December 2004, I was personally affected and felt a deep concern for those who had been immediately impacted, because I had now become a part of their world. We reached out to Ravi and were relieved to learn that he was safe. He was actually in Sri Lanka and ended up staying much longer than originally anticipated so that he could assist in the relief effort. That's Ravi's way. In fact, SLWCS began a tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation effort that continues to this day. We lobbied all of our networks to provide financial support for overcoming this devastation, and, through Ravi's efforts, SLWCS received recognition and additional funding both for tsunami relief and the work that the organization had been doing all along.

While the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society is doing important work on the ground in Sri Lanka, the creation and presence of a U.S. based tax-exempt non-profit organization is equally significant. It brings to us in this country an awareness of the myriad challenges Sri Lanka faces, and also provides us with an opportunity to support the work of SLWCS. I feel personally connected to this cause and I do what I can to promote and support it. I am just one example of many, which is truly indicative of how SLWCS has impacted people across the world.

Most importantly, the first ten years have seen tremendous strides in what the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society has achieved in its efforts to develop a model for the sustainable conservation and preservation of Sri Lanka's biodiversity, and I am confident that SLWCS will continue to be at the forefront of this effort in the years to come.

Happy 10th Anniversary!



SIPA interns and former board member, Tam Nguyen enjoying a Sri Lankan meal at the former Taprobane Sri Lanka restaurant in New York City that was operated by SLWCS board member Marie Fernando (seated on left at far end).

A Partnership for Challenging Times

Dr. M. Sanjayan - Lead Scientist, The Nature Conservancy

The world responded in many ways to the events of December 26th 2004. For The Nature Conservancy, it was not a question of should we help, rather it was a question of how. Even though we are by some measures the largest conservation organization in the world, with a million members and direct operations in 28 countries, responding appropriately to a huge tsunami, half a world away, was no easy matter. While staff, Board, and members wanted us to help, doing so effectively and in a manner consistent with our mission was a challenge that we were having difficulty surmounting.

That's when a call came from Ravi Corea, President of the Sri Lankan Wildlife Conservation Society (SLWCS). While I was familiar with the organization, my own organization did not have a previous history of either working in Sri Lanka or with SLWCS. Indeed, given the disparity in sizes, it is unlikely that SLWCS would have been the most logical partner for us. Still, Ravi was persuasive. He had been working closely with the Department of Wildlife Conservation in Sri Lanka, and had been asked by the Department to conduct GIS mapping as part of a rapid environmental assessment of the impact of the tsunami on the marine and coastal parks on the south coast. He asked for our assistance and inclusion into his team.



Within ten days of his call and just three weeks after the tsunami struck, with the support of our members and with a grant from National Geographic Society, we had assembled in Sri Lanka a team of GIS specialists, biologists and photographers. We were in-country for two weeks and surveyed, at a coarse scale, approximately 250 km of coastline. We also did the first dives on several important reefs and marine protected areas to find out what had happened underwater.

Our results point to three things. The first is that beach clean-up, debris removal, and invasive species controls are the biggest problems to the reefs and coastal areas. The wave itself did only limited damage to the coral reefs even in relatively shallow water. Indeed, much of the current damage is coming from debris that has been washed back into the ocean resulting in fishing nets adrift and concrete and building material loose on the bottom of the ocean floor, free to slam into the coral reefs. The second is that the damage on land was violent but patchy. Whether these patches, some over several hundred hectares, inundated with salt water will undergo regeneration or succession is as yet unknown. There are many signs of life returning and while it is true that we did not find the bodies of big animals, some small ones like tortoise, snails, rodents, and lizards did get killed. Some of the former freshwater ponds are saline and now devoid of fish or frogs. Third, is the importance of nature for the livelihoods of local people. The majority

of people who lost their livelihoods were reliant on nature for that livelihood. Given the rate of resource use, the weak enforcement of regulations, the lack of incentives for conservation and stewardship, it is likely that in many places, human over-use will result in greater long-term damage to nature and thus to peoples livelihoods than the tsunami itself.



Our specific recommendations, which we gave to the Department of Wildlife and other partner conservation organizations were accepted and currently some are being implemented. It is apparent that Sri Lanka needs to protect its natural barriers (sand dunes, mangroves, coral reefs) against future tsunamis or sea level changes. It also needs a Disaster Management Plan to deal with clean up after such events and it should invest in the sustainability and stewardship of the natural resources that so many of its coastal people rely on. National Public Radio, who went along for some part of our expedition, broadcast two reports on Morning Edition. The Denver Post, the Independent (UK), Discovery Science and The Nature Conservancy Magazine, all carried reports of our work and recently we were invited to lead a panel on Capitol Hill, as part of Oceans Week, on tsunami impacts.

Given that we had only a short time to carry out this work and that we were working in difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions with a multi-cultural team, it is truly a testament to the quality of people in both organizations that we managed to work so well together. By the end of our journey you certainly could not distinguish who was with TNC and who was with SLWCS. The teams were integrated and efficient. Each drew on the others strength and defined the meaning of partnership. As such, I know that the individuals at TNC who were involved with this effort look forward to continuing to work with SLWCS even though Sri Lanka is not a country we are currently working in as an organization.

For me this experience highlights the importance of strengthening the capacity of local conservation organizations. SLWCS is on the front line of conservation and environmental work locally. Without them and despite our size and capabilities, we would not have been able to effectively deliver action on the ground. Small, trustworthy local organizations like SLWCS are critically important in delivering tangible lasting results on the ground. On a personal note Ravi's call allowed me to participate in what can only be described as life changing service (read all about it at <http://nature.org/tsunami/>), and provided an avenue for my adopted country (USA) to contribute meaningfully to the environmental stewardship of the country of my birth (Sri Lanka) – and for that I am most grateful.

The SLWCS-Biosphere Expeditions program in Wasgomuwa

Dr. Prithiviraj Fernando - Chairman, Centre for Conservation Research

One of the main constraints in attempting to conserve elephants in Sri Lanka is the lack of baseline data on wild elephants. Although the people of Sri Lanka have had a long and close association with elephants dating back many millennia, this relationship has been with captive elephants. Practically all of current scientific knowledge on elephants is based on studies of African savannah elephants. It has mostly been assumed that Asian elephants have very similar behavior and ecological requirements. However, the habitat of African savannah elephants and Asian elephants is fundamentally different. Whereas African savannah elephants live in open grasslands and have been subject to little human activity, Asian elephants are forest animals and have over thousands of years adapted to anthropogenic changes in the Asian landscape. Consequently, the ecology and behavior of Asian elephants is very different to African savannah elephants. Work we have done has shown that ideas of elephant ecology such as, that elephants undertake long distance seasonal migrations, live in highly complex multi tiered social systems, and that grass is the main component of their diet, all originating from studies of African elephants, are not applicable to Asian elephants.

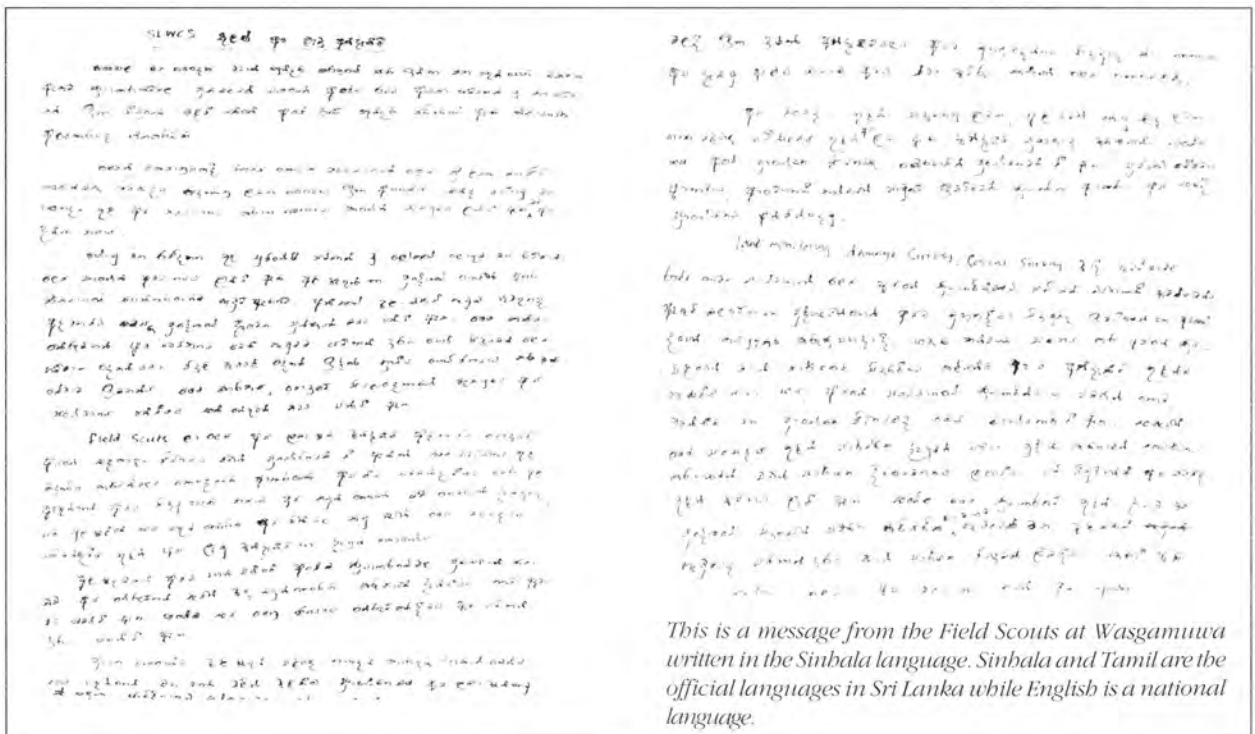
The lack of information on Asian elephants imposes severe constraints on developing management and conservation plans for them. Consequently, in Sri Lanka as well as across their range, the main strategy for their conservation has been to attempt and limit elephants to protected areas through translocation, and erection of electric fences. However, such practices conducted without consideration of elephant biology and ecology and without monitoring may actually be detrimental to elephant conservation.

One of the main reasons so little is known about Asian elephants scientifically is that they are very difficult to study due to the habitats they occupy and behavioral adaptation, to constant conflict with people. Therefore, to study them we have to use indirect methods such as radio tracking, dung analysis and genetic analysis. Due to logistic difficulties in working with wild Asian elephants, such studies necessarily need to be conducted over the long term over time periods of decades, to gain a full understanding of the ecology and behavior of elephants and to assess how management actions impact them. Such studies require stable long term funding, which unfortunately is not available from conservation funding agencies.



The project initiated by SLWCS and Biosphere Expeditions in Wasgamuwa, attempts to break new ground and provide funding for research through 'volunteer' programs. If successful, such programs can sustain research over the long term and provide a stable funding base which will encourage the undertaking of long-term studies that can provide critical data necessary for conservation of the Asian elephant.

Prithiviraj Fernando



This is a message from the Field Scouts at Wasgamuwa written in the Sinbala language. Sinbala and Tamil are the official languages in Sri Lanka while English is a national language.

SLWCS Projects and Programs

Saving Elephants by Helping People (SEHP)

SEHP integrates community participation into human-elephant conflict resolution, conservation and ecological research. The project promoted for the first time in Sri Lanka to fence elephants "OUT" rather than "IN" national parks leaving them more room to roam. This is considering 70% of the island's elephants range outside of the national parks. The project has installed nearly 20 kilometers of electric fencing around two villages in a bottom to top process. These efforts have stopped Human-Elephant-Conflict (HEC) in these villages reducing the violent interactions that occur when elephants raid villages. The Department of Wildlife Conservation is currently emulating some of the concepts developed by this project in their efforts to resolve HEC. SEHP has received continuous funding from the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund, International Elephant Foundation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Leo Model Foundation and Sanjay Kumar.

Field Scouts Program (FSP)

Developing local stakeholder capacity and forming partnerships with locals for wildlife conservation and research. Eight rural youth (5 men and 3 women) have been trained to conduct field research to develop a baseline database on the elephants in the Wasgamuwa Region. The initial data gathered by the FSP is proving that the forest reserves outside the Wasgamuwa National Park are an important habitat for elephants and other wildlife. The Field Scout Program under the SEHP project has received funding from the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund, International Elephant Foundation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation and the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.

Travellers Worldwide English Training Program

Teaching English and computer skills to rural villagers in Wilgamuwa is being done by the SLWCS-Travellers Worldwide Programme. Providing rural youth and young adults with the skills and knowledge required to join the mainstream work force will go a long way in alleviating poverty and contributing to social development in the villages.

Leopard Remote Camera Survey (LRCS) in the Wasgamuwa Region

A pilot leopard camera-trapping project to establish the presence and abundance of leopards in the Wasgamuwa Region. Initiated January 2005.

The First Post-Tsunami Ecological Impact Assessment

SLWCS was appointed to a seven-member committee by the Director General of the Department of Wildlife Conservation to conduct the first rapid ecological assessment of all the protected areas impacted by the Tsunami along the southern and southeastern coasts from Hikkaduwa to Okanda. SLWCS successfully completed the first GIS mapping and aerial survey of the Tsunami affected protected areas in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and National Geographic Society. The report has already been submitted to the DWC, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and other committee members.

Tsunami Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

SLWCS is assisting in the post Tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts of the DWC including building a Visitor Information Center for the Yala National Park. SLWCS has successfully obtained ground and aerial footage of the Tsunami affected protected areas with a high definition video camera.

The cameraman and equipment were provided by Discovery Channel. The footage will be used for the Visitor Center at Yala. The Yala Visitor Information Center will be built in partnership with Environmental Community Trust of England.

Livelihood Development of a Kirinda Fishing Village

SLWCS is providing fishing boats, engines and fishing gear to Tsunami displaced fishermen in the Andaragasyaya Grama Niladhari Division and empowering displaced women with financial support to establish small businesses. Through this effort, SLWCS is continuing to aide in the reconstruction and development of local people and their livelihoods. This project is conducted in partnership with the Abercrombie and Kent Global Foundation.



Somawathiya project integrates culture, science, education, conservation and development

Northwestern Region HEC Survey

A Rapid Socio-Economic assessment of Human-Elephant Conflict in the Puttalam, Anuradhapura and Kurunegala districts of Sri Lanka. Initiated in November 2004, this recently concluded project was funded by the Born Free Foundation. The NWR has the highest incidents of HEC in Sri Lanka.

Lahugala Electric Fencing

This project is in the planning stage. Establishing a community based solar powered electric fence for four villages situated along the southern boundary of the Lahugala Kitulana National Park at the request of the Department of Wildlife Conservation. The funds for this project have been received from the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund, the International Elephant Foundation and the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

Wetlands Project

SLWCS with funding support from the IUCN Netherlands Committee is developing an updated management plan and community awareness program for the Bellanwila Attitidya Marsh Sanctuary and conducting socio-economic surveys and PRAs to assess human impact on the Annaiwilinduwa Tanks Sanctuary and the Mahaweli flood plains of Flood Plains National Park and Somawathiya Chaitiya National Park.

Somawathiya Chaitiya Temple Project

A project that integrates the restoration and management of a historical cultural site with the conservation of a cultural icon, the elephant, while at the same time developing sustainable livelihoods for the local communities. The initial funding for this new project was provided by the Alexander Abraham Foundation.

Grants and Research Fellowships for SLWCS

2005 - United States Fish and Wildlife Service Asian Elephant Conservation Fund (ASE-0234) - *Labugala Electric Fence Project*.

2005 - Alexander Abraham Foundation - *Somawathiya Chaitiya Temple Project*.

2005 - Leo Model Foundation - *Operations and administrative overhead*.

2005 - IUCN Netherlands Committee - *Wetlands Conservation Project*.

2005 - Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund - *Labugala Electric Fence Project*.

2005 - International Elephant Foundation - *Labugala Electric Fence Project*.

2005 - The Nature Conservancy - *Tsunami ecological assessment and conservation*.

2005 - National Geographic Society - *Tsunami ecological assessment and conservation*.

2005 - A&K Global Foundation - *Livelihood Development of a Kirinda Fishing Village*.

2004 - Elephant Pepper Development Trust, Zimbabwe - *Growing chilies as an alternative crop and elephant deterrent*.

2004 - United States Fish and Wildlife Service Asian Elephant Conservation Fund (ASE-0216) - *Field Scouts Program*.

2004 - Born Free Foundation - *Northwestern Region Human Elephant Conflict Survey Project*.

2004 - Sanjay Kumar - *Operations, management and administrative overhead*.

2004 - Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund - *Field Scouts Program*.

2004 - International Elephant Foundation - *Field Scouts Program*.

2004 - World Heritage, UNESCO - *Operations, management and administrative overhead*.

2004 - Cleveland Metroparks Zoo - *Field Scouts Program*.

2004 - Travelers Conservation Foundation - *Capacity building and infrastructure development*.

2004 - Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation - *Field Scouts Program*.

2003 - Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund - *Field Scouts Program*.

2003 - United Nations Foundation, Washington, DC - *Saving Elephants by Helping People Project*.

2003 - Asia Program, Wildlife Conservation Society - *Landscape Level Project (preliminary research)*.

2003 - Leo Model Foundation - *Saving Elephants by Helping People Project (operations/program maintenance)*.

2002 - Computer Associates International Inc. - *Operations, management and administrative overhead*.

2002 - International Elephant Foundation - *Field Scouts Program (program initiation)*.

2002 - Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund - *Saving Elephants by Helping People Project*.

2002 - American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - *Community-based Ecotourism Project Proposal / World Ecotourism Summit, Quebec, Montreal, Canada*.

2001 - United States Fish and Wildlife Service Asian Elephant Conservation Fund (Grant #: 98210-1-G049) - *Saving Elephants by Helping People Project (electric fence installation)*.

2000 - Computer Associates International Inc. - *Operations, management and administrative overhead*.

1999 - Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund - *Saving Elephants by Helping People Project*.

1998 - Wildlife Trust - *Human-Elephant Conflict Resolution Pilot Project (via community participation)*.

1997 - Center for Environmental Research and Conservation, Columbia University and the Asia Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society - *Human-Elephant Conflict Field Research / Sri Lanka*.

1996 - Sir Arthur C. Clarke - *Initial development expenses to establish the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society in the USA*.

1995-1996 American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) - *Initial development expenses to establish the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society in the USA*.



A home broken by a crop raiding elephant



An elephant killed by an irate farmer



Cultivation Event - April 2004

On April 20th 2004, the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society held a cultivation event to promote the work of the Society as well as Sri Lanka as a tourism destination for US travelers. The event was held at the Sky Lounge in the Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza in New York City. The Chief Guest was the Deputy Ambassador of the Sri Lanka Mission to the UN, Mr. Rupert (Bob) Jayasinghe. SLWCS international board member, Dr. Natarajan Ishwaran was also present at the event. Columbia University, School for International and Public Affairs interns, Julie Poll and Liz Smith who also helps out as a consultant to the SLWCS, assisted with the organizing and planning of the event. The United States representative for Sri Lankan Airlines, Mr. Rohan Siriwardene, Vice President of Feld Entertainment, Inc, Mr. Thomas Albert and representatives from several high-end travel companies such as Discovery Tours and Lisa Linblad tours were also present.

A 20-minute documentary on the SLWCS projects and on the natural and cultural riches of Sri Lanka was shown. US Board member, Ms. Marie Fernando, did the catering for the event. Music for the event was provided by the Cecil Fernando Combo.



PBS expert panel, Beverly Hilton, Los Angeles

Seminars, Conferences, Symposiums and Workshops SLWCS participated/organized since 1998

1998 – Elephant Symposium, BMICH, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Biodiversity and Elephant Conservation Trust.

1998 – Symposium on Human-Elephant Conflict, University of Macquarie, Sydney, Australia. Society for Conservation Biology.

2002 – World Ecotourism Summit, Quebec, Canada. World Tourism Organization and United Nations.

2002 – International Elephant Symposium, Orlando, Florida, USA. International Elephant Foundation.

2003 – Symposium on Human Elephant Relationships and Conflicts. Biodiversity and Elephant Conservation Trust and International Elephant Foundation.

2004 – International Elephant Symposium, Dallas Fort Worth, Texas, USA. International Elephant Foundation.

2005 – International Travel Convention (ITB) – Berlin, Germany. Symposium Linking World Heritage Tourism to Community Development and Biodiversity Conservation. UNESCO.

2005 – UNESCO/Center for Environmental Studies University of Peradeniya. Workshop on World Heritage Sites benefiting Eco-Tourism and Biodiversity Conservation, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

2005 – Post-Tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation. IUCN/ACDI/VOCA, Washington, DC, USA.

2005 – Post-Tsunami Reconstruction and Rehabilitation. World Bank/IUCN, Washington, DC, USA.

2005 – The tsunami in Sri Lanka – Women's Mosaic, New York, USA.

2005 – PBS Expert Panel. Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, California, USA.

Recent Developments

In May 2005 the SLWCS with funding support from the Abercrombie & Kent Global Foundation provided brand new fiberglass boats and engines to a displaced fishing community in Kirinda.



The future is bright after receiving a new boat

Two elephant-shaped charity boxes were installed in the Departure Terminal of the Bandaranaike International Airport for departing travelers to make donations to elephant conservation. Two more of these charity boxes will be installed in the newly constructed Arrivals Terminal at the airport in the near future.



An elephant shaped donation box at the Airport



Setting new benchmarks for ethical and sustainable tourism

Sri Lanka Escape Tourism is an ecotourism initiative that began in 2003 to help support the programs of the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society. The goal is to create conservation projects that are self-sustaining and function independently of grants. To this end, 30% of all profits go directly towards supporting the projects of the Society.

Escape is focused on giving the client an 'insider's view' of Sri Lanka attained through its many local relationships and always giving back to these communities in every way possible. Through the partnership with the SLWCS, Escape Tourism has the ability to create an exclusive opportunity for travelers, showing them not only how, but also where their tourism dollars can affect conservation in a meaningful way. Always working with this main goal in mind, Escape tours allow visitors to see the country, its culture and history by giving them an understanding of Sri Lanka, its people and wildlife. This is achieved by customizing tours to suit our client's interests and giving the international community unique access and privilege insight into project sites supporting multiple levels of conservation. Through educating visitors about the issues and the work being done, we are always supporting the overall vision of SLWCS.

www.EscapeTourism.com



Villagers erecting a solar electric fence provided by SLWCS



A group of American naturalists enjoying a tour of Sri Lanka



How Conservation Goals... *Contd from page 6*

magistrates to give 50% of fines back to the Dept. We organized "Festivals of Wildlife Photography," we had film shows, courtesy generous visitors, all of which helped swell the Fund.

There was no jeep, so appeals went out to mercantile firms to make possible some easy payment schemes. The only foreign components came from the World Wildlife Fund, IUCN, and the Fauna Preservation Society, who gave generously.

And so we built up our little kingdoms in Yala, Wilpattu, Kumana and Gal Oya. Those were our small beginnings and by 1968 - 69, Wilpattu was showing off its magnificent leopards and the battle was temporarily won.

Unfortunately the 1970s saw some reversals when I had to go to Singapore for a couple of years and the

Dept. came to be run by bureaucrats. They were followed by foreign NGOs who introduced textbook conservation, which to the average wildlife official was incomprehensible. So the millions of dollars from GEF, from the ADB and World Bank seem to be spent in vain. The field staff remain in the same straits as 25 years ago with very little coming their way to help in their work, improvement of social status or housing, education etc. which will raise the standards of the Department. They get very little to challenge the Human-Elephant conflict, the rehab of other threatened wildlife etc.

I hope the endeavour of SLWCS will in some way bring some change in the attitude in the higher echelons of the Department.

I wish you many years of success!

Lyn de Alwis

Financial Report: SLWCS - Sri Lanka

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT For The Year Ended 31st December 2004

	2004 Rs.
Income	
Donations & Grants	5,148,178
Total Income	<u>5,148,178</u>
Expenses	
Project Expenses	629,485
Head Office Salaries	362,000
Field Staff Salaries	521,957
Telephone	59,014
Traveling & Hire Charges	177,043
Vehicle Maintenance	388,212
Building Maintenance	98,022
Building Rent	85,250
Office Equipment Maintenance	6,500
Stationary /Printing Charges	35,695
Depreciation	338,556
Staff welfare	53,750
Consultancy Fee	220,000
Secretarial Fee	8,585
Audit Fees	10,000
Entertainment	14,618
Stamp & Postage	5,170
Bank Charges	6,892
Total Expenses	<u>3,020,747</u>
Excess of Income Over Expenditure	<u>2,127,431</u>

BALANCE SHEET As At 31st December 2004

	Notes	2004 Rs.
ASSETS		
NON - CURRENT ASSETS		
Fixed Assets	1	906,056
		<u>906,056</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Hatton National Bank-Talangama		1,237,912
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>1,237,912</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>2,143,968</u>
Accumulated Fund		
Excess of Income Over Expenditure		2,127,431
		<u>2,127,431</u>
LIABILITIES		
Audit Fees		10,000
People's Bank Wilgamuwa		6,537
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>16,537</u>
TOTAL FUNDS & LIABILITIES		<u>2,143,968</u>

We certify that the above Balance sheet, Income and Expenditure account to the best of our belief contains a true account of the Income, Expenditure and Assets of the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society.

.....
Member

The above statement of account is in accordance with the books and documents maintained by the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society.

.....
KEERTHI MIHIRIPENNA & CO
Chartered Accountants
Colombo, 26.04.2005

Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2004

1 Fixed Assets

Description	Rate	Cost as at 01.01.04	Addition/ (Disposal)	Cost	Accumulated	Depreciation	Accumulated	W.D.V
				as at 31.12.04	Depreciation as 01.01.04	During The Year	Depreciation 31.12.04	as at 31.12.04
Motor vehicle	25%	-	1,135,000	1,135,000	-	283,750.00	283,750	851,250
Office Equipment	50%	-	94,612	94,612	-	47,306	47,306	47,306
Computer & Software	50%	-	15,000	15,000	-	7,500	7,500	7,500
		-	<u>1,244,612</u>	<u>1,244,612</u>	-	<u>338,556</u>	<u>338,556</u>	<u>906,056</u>

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

Excess of Income Over Expenditure	2,127,431
Add	
Depreciation	338,556
Audit Fees	10,000
	<u>2,475,987</u>
Less	
Additions Fixed Assets	(1,244,612)
Net Cash Flow	<u>1,231,375</u>
Hatton National Bank-Talangama	1,237,912
Peoples Bank Wilgamuwa	(6,537)
	<u>1,231,375</u>

Financial Report: SLWCS - United States

SRI LANKA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

www.SLWCS.org

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2004

INCOME	US\$
Project specific grants	72,350
Operations grants	55,000
Infrastructure development grant	10,000
	<hr/>
	137,350
Less: EXPENSES	
Projects, Sri Lanka	75,491
Administration	44,943
	<hr/>
	120,434
	<hr/>
BALANCE CARRIED OVER TO 2005	16,916

SRI LANKA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

www.SLWCS.org

OFFICE BEARERS – SRI LANKA 2004

Patron : Mr. Ariyaratne Hewage
President : Mr. Ravi Corea
General Secretary : Mr. Chandee Corea
Treasurer : Mr. Sumantha Fernando

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – SRI LANKA

Chairman of the Board : Mr. Sumantha Fernando
: Mr. Ravi Corea
: Mr. Chandee Corea
Auditors, Sri Lanka : Keerthi Mihiripenna & Co,
Chartered Accountants

OFFICE BEARERS – USA 2004

Patron : His Excellency the Sri Lanka,
Ambassador to the USA
President : Mr. Ravi Corea
General Secretary : Ms. Mala Samarasinghe
Treasurer : Mrs. Marie Fernando

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – USA

Chairman of the Board : Mr. John Linder
: Dr. Natarajan Ishwaran
: Mr. Ravi Corea
: Mr. David Burrus
: Dr. Patrick Mendis
: Ms. Mala Samarasinghe
: Mrs. Marie Fernando
Auditors, USA : Mr. Steven Sahani
Certified Public Accountant

Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society Staff & Consultants - 2005

ADMINISTRATION

Management

Operations Director : Mr. Chandee Corea

Operations

Technical & Logistics Manager : Mr. Amarasena Desaram
Technical & Logistics Assistant : Mr. Darshana Desaram
Field Housekeeper : Mr. A.G. Siriya
Cook : Mrs. U.G. Yasawathie

Consultants

Research Scientist (elephants) : Dr. Prithiviraj Fernando
Social Scientist : Ms. Zeenath Khalid
Research Scientist (leopards) : Mr. Mark Weckel
Research Scientist (Ecology
& Biodiversity) : Dr. Devaka Weerakoon
Development & Administration : Ms. Liz Smith

FIELD RESEARCH

Project Managers : Mr. Harsha Gammanpila
Mr. Nishantha Dharmasiri

Field Assistants : Mr. Upul Karunasinghe
Mr. Thushara Ekanayake
Ms. Anuradha Jayasinghe
Ms. Veroni Jayalath
Ms. Sandamali Kulasekera
Mr. J.P. Jayatilake

Field Scouts : Mr. Mahesh D Weerasekera
Mr. B. Rathnayake

NETHERLANDS COMMITTEE

IUCN

THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

Publications, Partnerships and Future Perspectives

SLWCS Publications

1. "GIS Model of HEC in Northwest Region of Sri Lanka" Zeenath Khalid & Nishantha Dharmasiri, 2005.
2. "Post Tsunami Ecological Assessment of Protected Areas" The Nature Conservancy & SLWCS, 2005.
3. "Using GIS to manage HEC" Zeenath Khalid, 2004.
4. "Thoughts and Perceptions of Villages Communities with regard to solar fencing setup with the facilitation of SLWCS" Zeenath Khalid, 2004.
5. "Ecology of Human Elephant Conflict" Ravi Corea, 2003.
6. "Thoughts and Perceptions of Villages Communities with regard to Eco/Nature Tourism in Wasgamuwa" Zeenath Khalid, November 2003.
7. "Saving Biodiversity by Improving Home Gardens" A Project Proposal for SLWCS. Nishantha Dharmasiri, November 2003.
8. "Saving Elephants by Helping People (SEHP)"- Lessons in Community Integrated Elephant Conservation - Chandeep Corea, Symposium on Human Elephant Relationships and Conflicts, September 2003.
9. "Field Scouts Program -Initial Training" Sharon Brooks, September 2003.
10. "Saving Elephants by Helping People (SEHP)"- Resolving Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka - Ravindra Corea, International Elephant Foundation Symposium, November 2002.

SLWCS Partnerships

- **Travellers Worldwide** - English training program in Wilgamuwa (Wasgamuwa) area. All year.
- **Global Vision International** - Assisting in the research to gather baseline data to establish the first Trans-Climatic Zone National Park in Sri Lanka All year.
- **Biosphere Expeditions** - Elephant conservation and research in and around Wasgamuwa National Park. September to October every year.
- **Worldwide Experience** - University students helping to conduct the various SLWCS research and conservation projects island-wide. All year.
- **Earthwatch Institute** - Elephant and leopard conservation and research in the Central Province. Six times a year.
- **LionAir** - Awareness campaign promoting the society to its passengers inviting them to contribute to make the society's conservation efforts successful.
- **Columbia University, USA** - School of International and Public Affairs.
- **Columbia University, USA** - Business School MBA - Small Business Consulting Program.

Looking Ahead: Future Perspectives

- **Sri Lanka Escape Tourism, Inc** - A nature, culture and adventure travel division established to develop a funding source for conservation and to create economic incentives for rural people to accrue tangible benefits from conservation and tourism.
- **Landscape Level Project** - A project developed to promote the establishment of Sri Lanka's first Trans-climatic Zone National Park in the Central and North Central Provinces.
- **Apiculture** - Agriculture diversification project to reduce villager's dependency on permanent cultivation and an

effort to use the honeybee as a deterrent to stop crop-raiding elephants.

- **Aquaculture** - Maximizing farmer's land use to obtain a higher economic gain, which will stop their subsistence livelihoods that negatively affect on the environment, which in turn will help to minimize human-elephant conflict.
- **Home Gardens** - A project that will encourage villagers to grow a diversity of plants that will benefit them as well as providing a crucial habitat for biodiversity.
- **Elephant Walk Thru** - A canopy level eco-tree lodge resort, which is being developed as a pilot project to show how to use buffer areas between forests and villages to develop sustainable economic incentives for rural people.
- **Marine and Coastal Habitat Conservation Project** - Probably the biggest environmental degradation in Sri Lanka occurs in its marine and coastal habitats. This project will help to establish baseline data on one of Sri Lanka's pristine coastal areas situated along the West coast.
- **Zoological & Botanical Surveys and Inventory** - A plan to assess the richness of the animal and plant biota at our project sites and to develop species inventories for these areas.
- **Growing chili as an elephant deterrent and alternative crop** - A project still in the process of being implemented with funding support from the Elephant Pepper Development Trust of Zimbabwe.
- **Citrus Project** - Buffer zone crop project to cultivate citrus in villages affected by the Human - Elephant Conflict (HEC) that would also increase the income of village people by introducing an easily grown cash crop.

Government Support

The following government institutions in Sri Lanka have approved projects of the society.

- Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
- Department of Wildlife Conservation
- Forest Department
- Sri Lanka Tourist Board
- Sri Lanka Board of Investment
- Irrigation Department
- Central Province, Matale District, Land Use Committee



Chandeep with foreign media partners.

Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society: A Historical Perspective 1995 – 2005

Founded as the National Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Society of Sri Lanka, Inc. – October, 1995
Name changed to Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society, Inc., in 1998

Founder

Mr. Ravi Corea

Founding Incorporators

Mr. Diva Sandrasagra
Mr. Asoka Seneviratne
Mr. Thalif Deen
Mr. Herbert Gunsekera
Dr. Adam Summers
Dr. Ulysses Rosenzweig
Mr. Tam Nguyen

First Officers

President : Mr. Ravi Corea
General Secretary : Ms. Amila De Saram
Treasurer : Mr. Herbert Gunsekera

First Board of Trustees 1995 – 1998

Dr. Gamani Corea, Sri Lanka – Honorary Trustee
Mr. Diva Sandrasagra, USA – Chairman of the Board
Mr. Asoka Seneviratne, USA
Mr. Thalif Deen, USA
Dr. Adam Summers, USA
Dr. Ulysses Rosenzweig, USA
Mr. Ravi Corea, USA
Mr. Herbert Gunsekera, USA
Mrs. Marie Fernando, USA
Ms. Mala Samarasinghe, USA
Mr. Gary Slaats, USA
Mrs. Sita De Saram, Sri Lanka

Ex Officers and Trustees since 1998

Officers

Mr. Ernest Demel : Vice President - 1998 – 2000
Mrs. Gulshan Hyderally : Vice President – 2000 – 2001
Ms. Surani Sirisena : General Secretary – 1998 - 2002
Mr. Anandalal Nanayakkara : Sri Lanka Country Director – 1996-1998
Mr. Jayantha Jayewardene : Sri Lanka Country Director – 1999-2001
Mr. Afsaan Saleem : Membership and Promotions Officer – 1998-1999

Trustees

Roger Caras, USA
Jayantha Dhanapala, USA
Dr. Hilda Jayawardene, USA
Dr. Larry Hawk, USA
Tam Nguyen, USA
Steve Unger, USA

Advisors 1995 to present

Dr. C.J. Coles – Curator in Charge (Emeritus) – Department of Herpetology, American Museum of Natural History, New York
Dr. Lyn de Alwis – President's Counsel and former Director of the National Zoological Gardens of Sri Lanka and the Department of Wildlife Conservation
Dr. Todd Disotell – Faculty, Anthropology Department, New York University
Dr. David Fitch – Faculty, Biology Department, New York University



The founding incorporators, board members, officers and three well wishers at the inauguration of the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society on October 1995 at the Taprobane Sri Lanka Restaurant, 56th Street, New York City, USA.



Founding incorporators discussing the goals and objectives of the new organization.



**Leo Model
Foundation**

The SLWCS is currently at:

- Fully Incorporated, Non-Profit, United States Internal Revenue Service 501c3 tax-exempt organization based in the U.S.A. U.S. Internal Revenue Tax Identification Number: 22-3509091.
- Fully registered Voluntary Social Services/Non Governmental Organization under Registration No L-77702 of November 20, 2003 in the Ministry of Social Services, SRI LANKA.

