



galapagosconservation.org.uk

Dear Lakshmi and the SWFI team,

I want to thank you for your invitation to the 2024 conference and for the prestigious GOOD fellows award. The recognition of the value of preserving natural wealth within the context of global wealth is critical. We live on a truly wonderful planet. Thousands of species are our neighbours, inhabiting all corners of the Earth, from the deepest depths of the ocean to the highest mountain peaks. Not only are there countless wonders to encounter, we humans are innately dependent on the health of these species and their environment; for our food, our water, our well-being and our industry... ultimately our survival.

"No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced", Sir David Attenborough.

In a world where there is an increasingly urgent need to protect species that are disappearing before our eyes, we are also dangerously losing our connection with nature. "Nature Deficit Disorder" is a term coined to describe the negative effects on children of not experiencing the natural world. Research has shown that people form their core environmental attitudes before 10 years old and as well as this, experience valuable well-being benefits from being in nature – increasingly important with growing mental health problems the world-over. I believe to really move to a sustainable future, we need to ensure that all children have the opportunity to experience nature with inspiring educators.

Even in the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador), one of the planet's first UNESCO world heritage sites and inspiration for Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution, there is a huge need for more investment in environmental education. Many island children have never set foot in the National Park, nor swam in the ocean, never experiencing what hundreds of thousands of international tourists flock to the Islands to experience.

At the Galapagos Conservation Trust, we are seeking change. Currently only 4% of philanthropic funding in the UK goes to environmental causes, and a tiny fraction of this goes to environmental education. I am grateful to SWFI for also being open to change the status quo, we need ambitious new partnerships between the NGO and private sector to tackle the challenges we face. I sincerely hope that we will continue to build connections with SWFI and your network as we strive for collective change – I invite your readers to reach out to me if they are interested to learn more about our work.

Very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jen Jones", written in a cursive style.

Dr Jen Jones
Chief Executive
Galapagos Conservation Trust