

Preventing Extinction

...One village at a time

Ten years of
The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation
2006–2016



AlTo Is.. People, working together

OUR WORKING PRINCIPLES

All Life Matters:

Non-human life is inherently good and precious, apart from its utility to humans, and all humans are created equal.

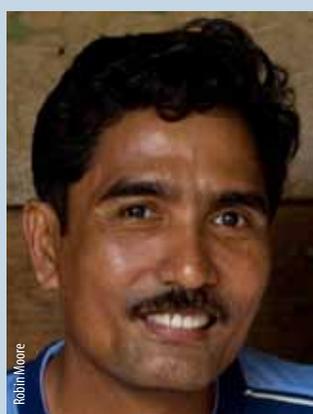
Quality of Life:

Increased wealth, possessions, or technology can be useful means, but are not ends in themselves; lower-tech, cheaper, and less complicated is often better. It is those things which improve the *quality* of human and non-human lives that we aim to support.

Go Deep, Do it Right:

In order to act in unity, all voices must learn to listen to each other—even to those who don't "speak." We aim to cultivate strong relationships, long-term commitments, and lasting changes, measuring our success across lifetimes rather than budget cycles.

WHAT WE DO



Says Pak Adolof Raja, community leader in Tanah Merah village, "The community here has gladly welcomed AlTo. Before, the maleo was about to go extinct, but now it's increasing, because people have become aware, and they've begun to care. Now people know it's something to be cared for and looked

after. There has been a big change because of AlTo. Before, we used to buy and eat maleo eggs, turtle eggs. But now, we don't eat them anymore. If you ask to buy them, the person will say, 'Oh, don't. We have to protect them.' Let them not become nothing but a name, like the dinosaurs."



AlTo's full-time staff at Camp Home Sweet Home, our base in the Tompotika region.

Top row, L to R: Mail, Sandhy, Noval, Agus, Pandji
Bottom row, L to R: Achmad, Ipan, Sera, Vivi, Anim, Marcy



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Cover Photos: Maleo: Kevin Schafer;
Inset photos; L to R: Keith Brofsky, Kevin Schafer,
Amanda Nicholls/Shutterstock, Keith Brofsky

on behalf of wild nature



WHY NOT START HERE, NOW?

Sometimes our Earth's challenges seem overwhelming: climate change, deforestation, mass extinction, ocean acidification, the list goes on. The destruction takes many forms, but human activities seem to be at the root of all of them. The relationship between the human community and the rest of the natural world of which we are a part seems terribly broken. As a human who cares, what can you do about it?

The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation/Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika—dubbed “Al-To” for short—is a small alliance of diverse humans who have banded together to try to answer that question, starting in one very special place.

The Tompotika Peninsula, on Indonesia's island of Sulawesi, is a small (c. 2500 km² / 1000 mi²) but globally significant region notable for its diverse range of natural habitats and species found nowhere else.

One of those species is the endangered Maleo bird. In 2006, realizing that theirs was one of the only maleo



Riza Marion

populations not yet extirpated, yet lacking the know-how and resources to conserve it, local Tompotikans made a request: would conservationists from outside the area be willing to join with them to find



Michael Heifer

AlTo Board member Dr. John Tasirin gives a visitor a musical tip.

... our planet's healing must take place chick by chick, trunk by trunk, drop by drop, all over the world.

ways to head off the maleo's fast-approaching extinction? Working together, can we humans find more sensitive and joyful ways to live on our Earth—ways that affirm rather than destroy other lives?

Thus was born AlTo: an international non-profit partnership made up of ordinary folks who care, governed by boards in both countries. Working in just this one small but very special corner of the world, AlTo will not save the planet. But our planet's healing must take place chick by chick, trunk by trunk, drop by drop, all over the world.

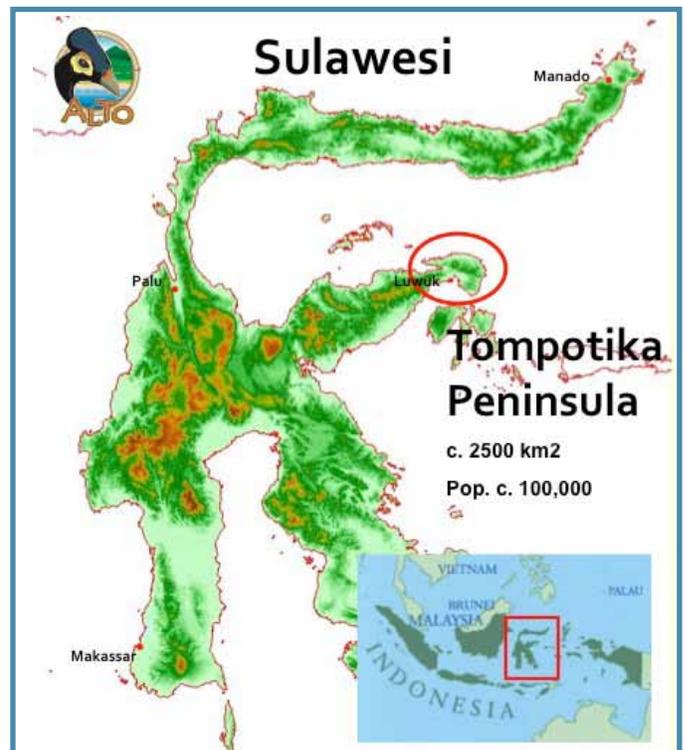
Here, we have made a start, and we can make a difference that matters. In ten years, it has mattered profoundly to a few non-human species that would likely otherwise have disappeared, and to thousands of human beings.

Together, in one small but very special place, AlTo is building one answer to the question: This healthier relationship between humans and nature—what might it look like? ~



Sheherazade

Dila wants to grow up to be a member of AlTo's staff.



AlTo Is... *Wildlife coming back*

Recovering the Endangered Maleo Bird

Iconic, Endangered, and Only in Sulawesi

The endangered Maleo bird, *Macrocephalon maleo*, is found only on Indonesia's island of Sulawesi, where it has declined by over 90% despite full protection under Indonesian and international law. In an evolutionarily unique strategy, maleo adults provide no parental care at all, but instead bury a single, enormous egg underground in a communal nesting area, where the egg is incubated by solar or geothermal heat.

The maleo is culturally important and iconic in Sulawesi, but human activities have not been friendly to it. In nearly all its former range, the maleo is now gone. Nearly, but not all: in Tompotika in 2006, a few maleos still visited their largest traditional nesting ground near the village of Taima. At that time virtually every egg laid was being taken and sold as a luxury item, but locals asked for help to prevent their maleos from vanishing completely, giving birth to the AlTo Alliance.

A Recovery Rooted in Partnership

Now, a decade later, adult maleos visiting the nesting ground have increased by 62%. Eggs are being left undisturbed to incubate naturally in the warm sand. Baby chicks, independent from the start, are allowed to hatch and fly off immediately. And the adjacent forest is being safeguarded against logging or clearing.

All this has been accomplished through a collaborative effort between AlTo and local villagers, with the endorsement of government. Former egg poachers now earn a

better wage by teaming with AlTo staff to guard the nesting ground and patrol the forest corridor, protecting the forest and ensuring that maleos can come and go freely and safely.

The journey has not always been smooth. A bout of poaching took place over five months in 2013, and forest fires in 2015 left a path of destruction. But the maleos' recovery is a source of joy to all, and Taima village has gained a name as the only place on earth where a maleo increase is documented. Income from the conservation lease supports free rice for all families who need it in the village. And the Indonesian government recognized the importance of the site in 2013 by declaring it a national "Essential Ecosystem." Says village leader Adrianto Panigoro, "Before AlTo, people didn't understand conservation. But now they feel a sense of ownership. They're proud of the maleo, and the community is happy with the harmony that's been created."

Scaling it Up

Building on the success in Taima, AlTo has recently begun a partnership with Teku/Tower villages to protect a second nesting ground at Kaumosongi beach, and recent surveys have identified a few additional sites. With the momentum of these successes, the long-term dream is beginning to seem within reach: a landscape-scale stronghold for maleos in Tompotika, with multiple safe nesting grounds and connected forests. For this endangered but recovering bird, a dream coming true is all the sweeter. ~



As their numbers have grown over the last decade, maleos have recovered not only their population, but also their "culture": where previously one or two maleo pairs nested in solitude, now complex social interactions take place.



A maleo pair will dig for up to three days to lay just one single, enormous egg. Protecting those eggs from poaching has been the key to Tompotika's maleo recovery.

from the brink

Giving Endangered Sea Turtles a Chance at Life

Ambassadors for the Sea

In 2008, knowing the key role sea turtles play in the health of marine environments, and in large part at the urging of late Board member Dr. Jack Barbash, ALTo began considering conservation action on behalf of endangered sea turtles. At about the same time, leaders in the Tompotika village of Teku sent ALTo staff an invitation: they had heard of the success with the maleos in Taima—would ALTo consider collaborating in some conservation activity in their village?

By happy coincidence, a field survey revealed that Teku's and Taima's beaches were among the very best sea turtle nesting beaches in the region. There, three species of turtles nested: Green turtles, Olive Ridley turtles, and critically-endangered Hawksbill turtles. Sadly, it was barely too late for a fourth species, the huge Leatherback turtle, which was last seen nesting in Tompotika in 2000.



Villager and 2013 “Disney Conservation Hero” Roma runs the sea turtle hatchery in Taima. “I would be so happy if one of the babies I had raised would come back here in the future,” he says.

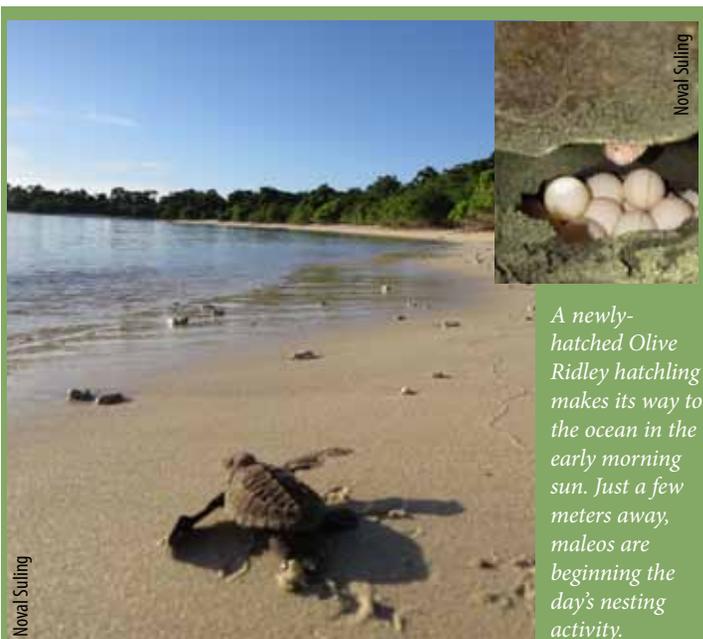
Tackling the Killer Threat

Though sea turtles face many challenges, their primary threat is widespread human poaching of adult turtles and their eggs, which, as for the maleo, is prohibited under Indonesian and international law. ALTo and our village partners devised a scheme to overcome it: teams of villagers and ALTo staff make nightly patrols of nesting beaches, and relocate eggs to a nearby safe hatching area, where babies are hatched and immediately released. Villagers can also receive a reward for eggs they've protected on their own.

Sea Turtles have also become a central focus of ALTo's efforts to strengthen law enforcement in the region. Tower

Village Head Pak Aswin Asamin, for instance, often makes his own turtle patrols: “I'm firm. If I see fishermen catching a turtle, I order them to release it.” Villagers even recently came upon a pair of high-status Military men with two adult turtles they'd caught--and successfully persuaded them to release them!

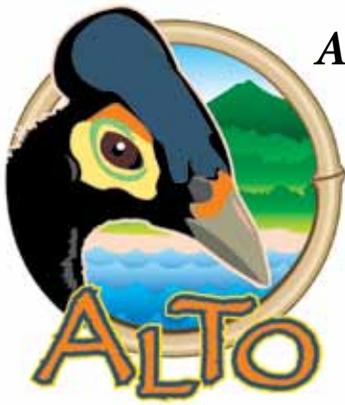
Sea turtles take twenty years or more to reach adulthood, and populations recover very slowly. But the signs are hopeful: under ALTo's program, the number of live hatchlings being released to the ocean has risen steadily each year, and has more than quadrupled since the effort began. With thousands of new babies starting out each year, perhaps Tompotika's sea turtles—rather than disappearing—may come back. ~



A newly-hatched Olive Ridley hatchling makes its way to the ocean in the early morning sun. Just a few meters away, maleos are beginning the day's nesting activity.



Healthy sea turtle populations help keep Tompotika's coral reefs healthy. Healthy reefs in turn support healthy fish populations, which tens of thousands of Tompotika's human residents rely on for subsistence.



ALTO Is...

10 YEARS of Conservation

Preventing extinction...



August 1, 2006:
Newly-formed Alliance for Tompotika Conservation/Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika ("Al-To") launches maleo nesting ground protection program in Taima, Tompotika



Robin Moore



Kevin Schafer

2008
• Sea Turtle Program Launched
• Teku Forest Program Launched



2010
• Bat Program Launched
• Organic Farming Training Phase 1
• Birding Training for ALTO staff
• EcoService: Beach Clean-Up and Trash Jamboree



2006

August 2006

- Maleo Program Launched
- Ikat Weavers' Assistance Project
- Tanah Merah



Marcy Summers

For 12 years, Mama Maria had no materials or funds to pursue her ikat tradition. But with ALTO's help, she and others are weaving once more.

2007

- Awareness Campaign Launched
- EcoService: Maleo Art Parade



Michael Heiner

Anim and Agus conduct an early Awareness meeting



Michael Heiner

2009

- Herp Survey—New Species!
- EcoService: Butterfly Survey
- Art for Conservation: The Calendar Project



Scott Newell



Marcy Summers



Umibaada

Cyrtodactylus batik, one of the new species discovered in ALTO surveys

- TIMELINE COLOR KEY**
- SCIENTIFIC SURVEYS
 - ECO-SERVICE TRIPS
 - ART FOR CONSERVATION

What's Ahead? 2017 and beyond:

- Second Tompotika International Maleo & Sea Turtle Festival
- Jackoustik Music for Conservation Celebration
- Maleo Field Trips | • Sulawesi-wide collaboration: Anoa & Babirusa Outreach



Courtesy of David Slater www.davidslaterphotography.co.uk

Challenge:
Tompotika Floods
Mar '16

one village at a time



Novel Stirling

Hooray! AIto receives Conservation Award from Mongabay.com, 2010

Organic farming: tastier veggies, no expensive fertilizer or land degradation required!



Trish Mace



AIto Ecoservice volunteers and villagers created two murals, in Taima and Teku



Pandji Kestroy

2012

- Law Enforcement Outreach Launched
- EcoService Art for Conservation: The Mural Project
- Survey of Maleo Sites

2014

- Kaumosongi Maleo Program Launched
- Art for Conservation: Youth Drama Festival



Marcy Summers

Lagoon behind Kaumosongi beach--prime maleo habitat



Oliver Hensel Brown



Samdhy Saswating

2016

Ten Years!

- Maleo Research Project Launched
- EcoService Tarsier Survey--Possible New Species!
- Kid's Library Project Launched

2011

2011

Five Years!

- Organic Farming Training Phase 2
- Taima Water Project
- Shrew & Rat Survey --New Species!
- Anim & Agus visit the U.S.
- Tripods in the Mud (with iLCP)



Sandesh Katur



Sandesh Katur

Tripods in the Mud documented Tompotika's spectacular natural landscapes and rare wildlife.

2013

2013

- "Ekosistem Esensial" Maleo & Sea Turtle Area Officially Protected
- Tangkuladi Bat Island Officially Protected
- Bat Survey - Possible New Species!



Oliver Hensel Brown

Government and Law Enforcement officials like these partnered with AIto to achieve official protection for the Taima Maleo area and Tangkuladi Bat Island

Challenge:
Maleo Egg Poaching
Oct '13 - Feb '14



Robin Moore

2015

2015

- Art for Conservation: First Tompotika International Maleo & Sea Turtle Festival
- Pandji & Ipan visit the U.S.



Keith Brofsky



Keith Brofsky

Challenge:
Tompotika Fires
Sept '15

At Festival, entire villages came out to celebrate Tompotika's natural heritage



Novel Stirling

AlTo Is... Loving, learning about and

Outreach in Tompotika's schools and villages



Get 'Em When They're Young

AlTo's successes in the field are exciting, but they are not enough; unless loving and looking after their natural heritage becomes widespread and integral in Tompotikan culture, recovery of maleos, sea turtles, or forests will not last.

Creating lasting change begins with children. So, in every one of Tompotika's more than 100 primary, middle, and high schools—as well as dozens of schools in Tompotika's gateway city, Luwuk—AlTo staff coordinate with teachers to deliver special interactive Conservation Awareness meetings to encourage knowledge and love of nature. Taking one topic at a time—maleos, sea turtles, forests, or proper trash management, for instance—AlTo staff present information, run games and activities, and ask questions of the generally very-enthusiastic children. Posters and special notebooks are given out, and every kid leaves with a sticker, pencil, or other take-home to remind him or her of the conservation message. This way, AlTo staff reach about a thousand kids each month, including during school holidays, when staff round up groups of kids out playing in the streets.

The attention seems to pay off. Though for the first time they hear it, conservation may be a hard sell—"What use is a sea turtle?"—

AlTo staff members Anim, Noval, and Agus conduct an Awareness meeting in a classroom in Batusimpang. Says Anim, "Children have a very important role, because usually they care more than adults. And kids will go home and tell their parents and other adults what they've learned."

short story and essay contests that AlTo has sponsored demonstrate that the themes of pride, empathy, and mutual interdependence with the rest of nature resonate across all ages. As one sixth-grader put it, "We must save the maleo because it is like no other bird. We humans must have a conscience. If the maleo goes extinct, Sulawesi won't have its Faunal Pride anymore."

Wildlife Laws Beginning to Get Traction

But AlTo's outreach efforts are not limited to schoolchildren. Groups of adult villagers are also curious and engaged participants in AlTo staff's conservation "Campaign" meetings. 2012's beautiful AlTo-sponsored mural paintings remind villagers of what they love, and billboards throughout Tompotika encourage awareness of the law.

And through a series of targeted workshops and meetings, AlTo and government partner agency BKSDA have sponsored special outreach to law enforcement personnel across the region, resulting in the regency's first successful instances of reporting and enforcement of wildlife crime law. The ripples are widening: in 2014, officials at the Luwuk airport for the first time confiscated four maleo eggs that a passenger was attempting to smuggle out.



celebrating wild nature



Hawksbill Turtle by Krisno Dohal, age 17

Art for Conservation

Art: the “Stored Honey of the Human Soul”

Theodore Dreiser’s definition does much to explain why AITo has sponsored several Arts projects in the service of conservation outreach. The Arts help to develop and express what is best and dearest within us, and to find those places where it nourishes the world.

Art inspires love, and we protect what we love. In 2009, the Youth Calendar Project introduced a dozen Tompotika teenagers—none of whom had previously been particular nature lovers—to their native wildlife. They gained exciting new painting and drawing skills, but many also became keen new conservationists. As one student put it, the experience was “one of the great things in my life... But for me, it is not enough yet. I hope I can do more for this planet.”

... changing minds, hearts, and behavior is really about “do”

Art also creates a big tent. In what we hope will become a regular event, the first Tompotika International Maleo and Sea Turtle Festival held in 2015 was a day-long series of games, booths, exhibitions, and dramas that drew *all* members of the community—adult men on motorbikes, mothers with babies on their hips, grandparents and kids—to the free public event. In a variety of positive, fun activities, Tompotikans of all stripes joined together to celebrate their rich natural heritage.

Conservation can sometimes seem to be full of “*don’ts*.” But changing minds, hearts, and behavior is really more about “*do’s*.” *Do* love your maleos, *do* admire the beauty of your coral reefs, *do* give thanks for the deep peace of the forest. It seems pretty clear that Tompotika is heading in a new direction. And it’s dead obvious that people are enjoying the journey! ~



photos by Keith Brofsky

Tompotika high school kids perform their conservation drama at Festival. Says coach Nick Fury: “Theater has a way of touching people. They remember the villains, the heroes. The story sticks with them and creates a strong impression.”



AlTo Is...

... Protecting natural habitats and their native stewards

FORESTS & BATS: We need them, they need each other

Without natural forests around them, life for the people of Tompotika and the world would be bleak indeed. Floods, landslides, and soil loss would be rampant; the clean air and water we can't live without would diminish; nearby crops wouldn't grow as well and hundreds of marvelous species would be lost. But forests, in turn, depend on wildlife.

Fruit bats play a critical role in maintaining and restoring healthy rainforests--and many fruit crops—through pollinating trees, dispersing seeds, and spreading fertilizer. But Tompotika's fruit bats were being decimated, as hunters captured them by the thousands for commercial sale in distant bushmeat markets.

Part of the key lay in Tangkuladi island, a 7-hectare (17-acre) uninhabited island off the shore of Taima village. Roosting there all day before a night's activity in the forest, tens of thousands of bats relied on the island as a safe resting place until hunting pressure drove their lives into extirpation and chaos.

AlTo spent two years working with local landowners and government to explore possibilities, and in 2013 a solution was found: the island has now officially been declared a Local Marine Protected Area, (KKPD), and AlTo holds a conservation lease from the landowners for its management. All hunting of bats, sea turtles, or other wildlife on the island is prohibited, and only low-impact traditional fishing methods are allowed in its offshore waters. And the result? Villagers are pleased, and note that the bats are now, "Oh, so many!" Long live bats and forests! ~



Tangkuladi Island, bat Haven



© Merlin Türttle /BCI www.baton.org

...Improving the quality of human lives

Sometimes simple things that many of us take for granted can make a profound difference in people's lives. If you spend a lot of time in a city, for instance: having a forest to step into and breathe deeply. Or, if your eyesight has grown hazy with aging, trying on a pair of reading glasses for the first time.

As a kind of "thank you" to our partner villages for their efforts on behalf of conservation, AlTo asks what villagers need, and tries to respond as best we can. So now, with eyeglasses provided by AlTo, for example, elderly villagers can once again mend a pocket, mince vegetables, or clearly see the faces of their grandchildren.

And, with AlTo's help, children in Tompotika now have books to read. At the request of teachers, AlTo has selected, translated, and provided copies of some of the very best literature and science books for children, setting up school libraries so that all children—most of whom would otherwise have no books at all—have access to the wonderful world of reading. Furthermore, by selecting the right books, AlTo can promote conservation values while encouraging reading and education. That's what we call a win-win all around! ~



photos by Robin Moore



Jer Bird

...Discovering new life

The scientific community has long known that Sulawesi is not only extremely biologically rich and highly distinctive, but it's also woefully understudied. AITo is trying to help change that.

In this last decade, with our partners AITo has been involved in the discovery of at least *nine* completely new species previously unknown to science, and potentially as many as 14! *Oreophrynus tompotika*, *Cyrtodactylus batik*, and more—frogs, geckoes, shrews, bats, possibly even a new species of tarsier—and that's just from the few groups that have received attention! With your help, in future the numbers are sure to rise.



Umlieida/ Angga Bahmanyah



Umlieida/ Angga Bahmanyah



Umlieida/ Angga Bahmanyah



Sigit Wamoro

...You, nurturing life

AITo is an Alliance of caring people like you. You band together with others who also hunger for a greener and happier world, and AITo is a channel for that care. AITo staff act as your agents, putting your values to work in one very special corner of our planet.

There are many ways to get involved. Volunteer your special skill, join an eco-service trip to the area, make a financial contribution—all forms of giving are needed.

To become an AITo Ally, use the enclosed envelope, or send your check to:

The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation
21416 86th Ave SW
Vashon, WA 98070 USA
tel: +1.206.463.7720 ~ info@tompotika.org

To view videos about our work, see samples of our outreach materials in English or Indonesian, or donate online, please visit:

www.tompotika.org



Baby Anoa by Julianto Labelo, age 17

A huge “thank you” to these Allies:



Scott Newell

“Our world is small and troubled. What can one person do to cure Planet Earth? It seems hopeless. It is not! I’ve tried to help by contributing financially to many valid and useful organizations, but had no feedback, not knowing how my tiny contribution was used....That changed when I learned about AITo. I joined the 2009 tour, that was much more than a tour... [We] surveyed the genetic diversity of butterfly fauna. I am now convinced that one individual --me--can make a difference. Others can too, even if unable to travel to Sulawesi. Donors can be sure they’re getting their money’s worth!”

—Dr. Gary Bernard, Federal Way, WA

and...

- S.O.S. (Save our Species)
- AITo Athena’s Circle Donors
- hundreds of caring people just like you, in thirteen countries!



Alliance for Tompotika Conservation
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