

BUNGALOW SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE

Mr. Rahula Dassenaieke (Chair), Jehan CanagaRetna, Shanaka Wijesinghe, Kamaya de Soysa

The bungalow revenue did not meet the expected contribution to the Society compared to previous years. This was mainly due to the aftermath of Easter attacks on 21st April 2019, which resulted in restrictions of holiday travel throughout the country for a substantial period of time. This effect was not faced by only the WNPS but the entire hospitality industry in Sri Lanka.

Yet, the Society made a net profit of Rs. 68,960 against a profit of 259,948 in the previous year. A detailed breakdown of the 2019 accounts is shown in the annual accounts under “notes to the financial statements”.

The Five year financial comparison of the Bungalows is stated below in the chart:

Bungalow	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Yala	(5000)	188,000	228,000	110,235	(92,670)
Wilpattu	(257,000)	(117,000)	(11,000)	204,000	173,000
Udawalawe	(366,000)	(487,000)	126,000	(54,287)	(11,370)
Net profit	(628,000)	(416,000)	343,000	259,948	68,960

Source: AGM reports of the WNPS

PALATUPANA (YALA)

The Yala Bungalow managed by the Society had a serious setback with bookings after the deadly Easter attacks on 21st April '19. The fear factor continued for some time resulting in restrictions in holiday travel by locals and foreigners alike. As the tense situation was easing and things were falling into place, severe drought conditions compelled the Yala National Park to close for a period of one and a half months, further preventing guest occupancy of our bungalow. Whilst bookings through the WNPS HO were very low, thanks to Bungalow-Keeper, Mr. Damith, we managed to sell a few more nights on an ad-hoc basis to non-members. If not for these extra bookings, losses would have been much greater than they appear in our accounts.

There are over 375 lodges, guesthouses, and hotels in the vicinity of Yala NP with far better facilities available than the WNPS Bungalow. The EXCO along with the Bungalow Subcommittee have taken a decision to renovate and upgrade the facility in 2020.

Additionally, to get the required electricity, a minimum 5 kva generator/solar system is in place to operate a fridge, a few fans, and lights. Further, renowned Architect Romesh Fonseka who recently visited the site has volunteered to redesign and provide the bungalow with a facelift to suit the ambience of this beautiful location. We are waiting for his final plan and cost to make a decision on how to fund this renovation, as the bungalow in its current state will not garner any bookings to make a difference to the Society's net gain.



1000 YEAR OLD TREE AT PALATUPANA

UDAWALAWE

Management of The Udawalawe bungalow has changed hands to Mr. Mahawatte, on behalf of the Society. Mr. Mahawatte has invested a considerable sum in order to uplift basic standards including bathrooms and also by making an additional room, where now up to 10 guests can easily sleep at this bungalow. WNPS also contributed Rs. 175,000 for this purpose to be deducted in 12 monthly installments from the monthly management fee, which is Rs. 20,000 per month. Unfortunately, despite making special rates and offers specially for the WNPS, poor patronage by members has created a situation where Mr. Mahawatte is also finding it a non-viable project as he cannot cover his basic expenses such as staff wages, electricity, maintenance etc. Therefore we ask our members to make use of the bungalow, which is situated in a beautiful location not far from the park entrance.

WILPATTU

The management of the Wilpattu bungalow has been contracted to Mr. A. Stephen for a sum of Rs. 20,000 per month. Since the contract is expiring in August 2020, the Committee has decided to call for fresh tenders in 2020 in order to provide the Society the best financial option along with the most competent management for running of the bungalow. When ready, the Bungalow Committee will send out details of the tender via its social media and email to its membership. They will also advertise in the newspapers for individuals other than members to have an opportunity to put in their tender.

GENERAL

As stated in previous reports, the management of the Udawalawe and Wilpattu bungalows are outsourced on the condition that members of the Society are given priority booking at the subsidised rates as stipulated by the General Committee, and as revised by them from time-to-time.

Once again, we request all members to patronise these bungalows, so conveniently located close to the entrances of the major National Parks, and enjoy the benefits. The Society is also working on having a tracker from the DWC allocated for the duration of the booking, subject to the rules and regulations of the Society.

Since the primary intention of the Society is to divert net funds it generates from the bungalow management towards conservation and scientific projects, we seek financial and / or material contributions from our generous membership, donors, and sponsors to make our bungalows some of the favorite holiday accommodations in the vicinity of our three key National Parks.

As per the chart shown at the beginning of the report, we see a clear direction of upward mobility in the net revenue from 2017, albeit 2019 taking a hit due to the barbaric Easter Sunday bombings and subsequent severe drought that closed the parks for an extended period. Furthermore, the conditions of the Wilpattu and Yala bungalows need to be evaluated for further upgrading. We do understand that the management of bungalows takes a special skill and three fabulous locations given to the WNPS by the Government need to be taken full advantage of.

The Committee extends its great appreciation for the work undertaken by the Administrative Secretary Ms. Kamaya de Soysa and the Finance Consultant Mr. Pradeep De Silva after taking over duties from former Mr. George Thambapillai. A special thank you to our bungalow keeper Mr. Damith for diligently keeping our members satisfied to the limits of what he has been dealt with. Coordinating the bookings for members with different management groups is not always an easy task. Our HO team will always endeavor to ensure that the needs of the membership are paramount.

