

# African wildlife NEWS

*Your support at work in Africa's landscapes*

Central Africa has both great apes and insecurity. AWF has partnered with a security firm to work in remote locations in Cameroon, northern Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere.

## Africa's 4 great apes

Africa is home to four species of great apes: the bonobo, chimpanzee, eastern gorilla (which includes the mountain gorilla subspecies), and the western gorilla. At one time, the continent boasted hundreds of thousands of great apes. Now, sources estimate there are about:

- 25,000 – 50,000 bonobos
- 400,000 chimpanzees
- 3,000 – 10,000 eastern gorillas
- Up to 150,000 western gorillas

## Shutting down the illicit wildlife trade

*See our special supplement inside.*

## Rising to the Challenge

*To protect great apes, AWF is expanding its work in Central Africa—despite challenges that make conservation even more difficult than usual*

**S**eventeen people, five days, 90 km (60 mi). This was the Walk Through Dja, a trek arranged by AWF and the national wildlife authority to get an inside look at the true state of Cameroon's Dja Faunal Reserve. Dja measures 5,260 sq. km, or 1.3 million acres. Because of its massive size and the limited resources of the Cameroonian wildlife authority, the World Heritage Site is not regularly traversed.

"AWF has been assisting Dja's protected area authority to target its patrols for greatest efficiency and effectiveness. But not surprisingly, there has been limited information about what might be happening in the middle of the reserve," said Jef Dupain, AWF's technical director for West and Central Africa, who arranged and led the trek.

The walk was memorable, to say the least. The hikers—among them individuals from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (or IUCN) and the European Union representative for environmental

programs in Cameroon—crossed through dense foliage and chest-high water that often slowed their pace down to 1 – 2 km per hour. They hiked in temperatures that peaked at 95 degrees Fahrenheit, and experienced sudden rainstorms. They endured humidity levels that occasionally reached 85 percent.

But perhaps the most memorable part of the walk was the near-total absence of wildlife sightings.

### 'No single conservation activity'

More than 50 mammal species are said to be found in Dja. The team documented *signs* of wildlife—dung or tracks of forest elephants, gorillas and chimpanzees, for example. But they were shocked by the low abundance of these key species.

"Dja is virgin forest, with habitat quite untouched—but it's a bit of a deception," explained Dupain following the trek. "There seems to be a lot of hunting going on. We encountered more signs of poaching than signs of wildlife."

*Continued on page 6*





The African Wildlife Foundation, together with the people of Africa, works to ensure the wildlife and wild lands of Africa will endure forever.

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# Promise, and Hope, Ahead



**M**any of us at AWF would call ourselves optimists. In fact, I would contend that being an optimist is almost a prerequisite for working in the field of conservation! Even so, the rise in poaching of Africa's elephants and rhinos these past few years has given even the most hopeful of us a moment of pause.

As we approach the end of 2015, however, things on the continent appear to be looking more promising than even a scant 12 months ago. Several countries—including a number of African nations—destroyed their ivory stockpiles, in very public statements against ivory trafficking. And, since the beginning of the year, Asian and African authorities have reported several significant seizures and arrests.

Thanks to your contributions, AWF has been able to provide additional support to the global fight against wildlife trafficking. We've contributed detection dogs to wildlife authorities, funded more expansive protection efforts for elephants, such as in southern Tanzania (a poaching hotspot), and even offered our voice to support state legislation banning ivory sales in the United States. You can read more about the progress being made in our special supplement, found between pages 4 and 5.

**Things appear to be looking more promising than even 12 months ago**

For better or for worse, Africa's elephants and rhinos tend to be the face of wildlife trafficking and as such are receiving a fair amount of attention these days. Great apes in Africa tend not to get the same sort of consideration, yet they, too, face significant threats, including habitat destruction and bushmeat hunting. To make things even more challenging, many great ape populations are found in Central Africa—not the easiest region in which to work! Our cover story outlines some of the challenges we face in protecting Africa's great apes, but also how we're working to overcome those challenges in places such as Cameroon's Dja Faunal Reserve and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Bili-Uele Protected Area Complex.

AWF has you to thank for helping to move the needle in a positive direction in our fight to save Africa's wildlife and wild lands. Your generous support is making sure wildlife, from elephants to rhinos to lions (see page 7) continue to thrive into the future.

Thank you,

*Patrick Bergin*

Patrick J. Bergin, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

AWF's own Jimmiel Mandima had the honor of placing an ivory piece on the crusher conveyor belt during the Times Square ivory crush in June. Read more about the crush and other efforts to combat wildlife trafficking in our special supplement, found between pages 4 and 5.



Jose Chaves / WCS

# AWF roundup



# 42%

Drop in African lion population in past 21 years, according to International Union for Conservation of Nature (or IUCN)

Delta Hain

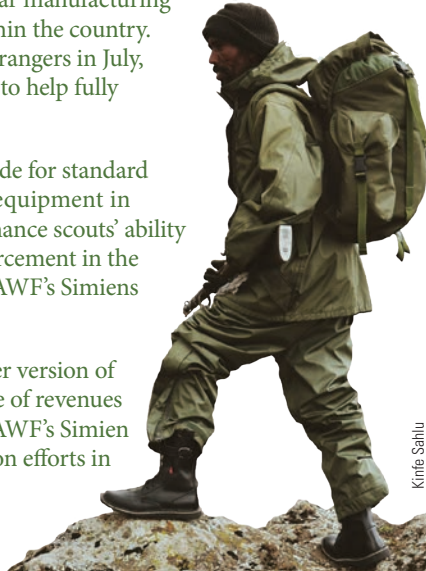
## Booted up in the mountains

In Ethiopia's Simien Mountains National Park, the high-elevation terrain is rugged and the climate includes rainy seasons and temperatures near freezing at night. AWF partnered with footwear company Oliberté to specially design and manufacture 80 pairs of boots based on scouts' specifications. All boots were made by hand at Oliberté's factory in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia—coincidentally the world's first Fair Trade Certified footwear manufacturing facility—with leather sourced from within the country. The boots were delivered to the Simien rangers in July, along with new Gore-Tex outdoor gear to help fully protect them from the elements.

"EWCA lacks adequate funding to provide for standard ranger equipment. By providing this equipment in collaboration with Oliberté, we will enhance scouts' ability to patrol and provide effective law enforcement in the park," explains Zeleke Tigabe Abuhay, AWF's Simiens landscape manager.

Oliberté will also be offering a consumer version of the "Simien boot" for sale. A percentage of revenues from Simien boot sales will go toward AWF's Simien landscape program and our conservation efforts in the national park.

For more on Oliberté, visit [oliberte.com](http://oliberte.com)



Kinfé Sahlu

## Kidnapped girls return

The Bili-Uele Protected Area Complex is a haven for wildlife, which includes forest elephants and chimpanzees, but many of the conservation challenges here arise from the area's insecurity. This was underscored in a particularly poignant way when five female hostages, who had been held by the Lord's Resistance Army for two years, finally returned home in June. AWF has partnered with environmental security firm Maisha Consulting to help enhance security in the area (see page 7).

See photos of the girls' return at [facebook.com/MaishaMeansLife](https://www.facebook.com/MaishaMeansLife)

## Birds of prey fall prey to humans

Vultures boast unique adaptations that make them successful scavengers—their strong eyesight, for example, allows them to spot carcasses from far away. Ironically, such features have led to the vulture's rapid population decline, as these raptors snack on poisoned carcasses set out by people retaliating against carnivores. According to research published this June in the journal, "Conservation Letters," such actions have led to population declines of more than 80 percent across Africa's eight vulture species. AWF Samburu Ecologist Eric Reson, who studied vultures for his master's research, writes in a blog post that African governments and other concerned entities are now on borrowed time. To mitigate any further vulture losses, he urges, interventions must be "quick and based on sound science."

Read Eric's blog post, at [awf.org/vulture-crisis](http://awf.org/vulture-crisis)



Poulomee Basu

## Eat chocolate, save elephants

Endangered Species Chocolate continues to support AWF's species conservation efforts through the sales of its chocolate. The company's donations to AWF have played an important role in our work to protect elephants in northern Tanzania's Tarangire–Manyara ecosystem. Recent surveys show that Tanzania's elephant numbers have been slashed by 60 percent in the past five years, but during the same time period the

elephant population in the Tarangire–Manyara ecosystem increased by 64 percent. This stark difference is due in part to the robust counter-poaching programs that AWF and its partners have supported in northern Tanzania, made possible by donors like Endangered Species Chocolate.

To purchase *Endangered Species Chocolate* and support AWF, visit [chocolatebar.com](http://chocolatebar.com)

Poulomee Basu







**ABOVE:** In addition to actual school construction, conservation education is a core part of AWF's African Conservation Schools Program. Pictured here are students from Lupani Conservation Primary School in Zambia. **INSET:** Elizabeth Babalola is using her time in AWF's Conservation Leadership & Management Program to help expand conservation education opportunities to young Africans. **BELOW:** The latest class of conservation leadership associates include (from left) Tibebu Yelemfrhat Simegn from Ethiopia, Susan Sekirime from Uganda and Jia Qiao from China.



## New Opportunities

*A young Nigerian shares what she is gaining from working on AWF's African Conservation Schools program*

**T**his August, the fourth class of AWF's Conservation Leadership & Management Program (CLMP, formerly the Conservation Management Training Program) began its orientation at our Nairobi headquarters. The Class of 2017 includes:

- **Susan Sekirime**, who previously worked for AWF as a monitoring and evaluation officer in Uganda;
- **Tibebu Yelemfrhat Simegn**, who has a background in wildlife management with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority; and
- **Jia Qiao**, who hails from China and recently interned at the UN Environmental Programme's Great Apes Survival Partnership.

As this group moves into its first field postings, we caught up with an associate from the Class of 2016 to hear how her CLMP experience has fared thus far. Here, **Elizabeth Babalola** shares her story:

Unlike my Kenyan colleagues in CLMP who camped at Hell's Gate National Park and visited the Mara with Wildlife Clubs of Kenya, I grew up in a concrete jungle amidst the hustle and bustle of Lagos, Nigeria. My first trip to a national park was on a field trip during my university days.

### We are planting the seeds for a conservation mindset

At Yale University, where I did a master's in environmental management, I took every chance I got to dive deeper into conservation and environmental education. I planted trees in New Haven. I worked in Washington as a summer intern with an environmental education firm. All the while, I dreamt of developing similar programs for students in African countries—opportunities that I didn't have in Lagos.

Now, working on the African Conservation Schools team, I am able to do that, and so much more. We are planting the seeds for a conservation mindset in the next generation. In addition to constructing physical school buildings, we are working with staff at each school to design engaging co-curricular activities for each age group. Students may complete activities on the school's nature trail or tend the school garden. There will be field trips to nearby national parks, which most of these kids have never had a chance to visit. We'll bring in park wardens to share their experiences. We'll also invest in improving teachers' ability to teach and share their conservation knowledge.

From the moment I gained admission to Yale, I was bent on going back home to work in an African country, especially in conservation education. My friends thought I was crazy. But in my final year, I learned of AWF. At Yale's career fair, I met COO Jeff Chrisfield, who sold me on the Conservation Leadership & Management Program.

Over the years, several people like Jeff have influenced my life. The African Conservation Schools program is an opportunity for me, in turn, to invest in the lives of young Africans. ■





AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION®

# BATTLING THE TRADE



The New York City ivory crush in June was one in a series of public declarations by governments around the world against the illicit wildlife trade.

Julie Larsen Maher / WCS

## The Momentum Builds

*More governments—including Uncle Sam—are stepping up to shut down the illicit wildlife trade*

Anyone who has encountered the Naked Cowboy knows that New York City's Times Square sees its share of unusual attractions. But the morning of June 19 was extraordinary, even by Big Apple standards. Take, for example, the table overflowing with illicit wildlife products. Or the line of green-uniformed officers guarding a display of carved ivory statuettes.

And then there was the 25-ton, teal-colored rock crusher sitting under a giant American Eagle Outfitters billboard. By morning's end, the crusher had destroyed 1 ton of confiscated ivory as part of an event hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)—sending a clear message that there is no trade to be had in elephant ivory.

More importantly, the ivory crush continued to build on the momentum around fighting the illicit wildlife trade.

### Strong African leadership

“What was once a regional or local African problem has become a global crisis,” said Dan Ashe, director of USFWS, in his remarks at the event. “By crushing this ivory, we’re taking steps to stop this trade... to say to the world, ‘We will be a leader, and join other nations in leadership to stop the trade in ivory and stop the killing of elephants.’”

Already in the first half of 2015, five other nations had destroyed all or some of their ivory stockpiles, including Kenya, Ethiopia and the Republic of Congo. “Increasingly we are seeing strong African leadership on this issue,” says Daudi Sumba, AWF’s vice president for program design and government relations. “Many African countries are acknowledging the poaching that is taking place—and taking action to put a stop to the wildlife trade.”

Indeed, governments in Africa appear to be dedicating more resources to combating wildlife poaching. Botswana, for example, has involved its defense forces in wildlife protection, according to Philip Muruthi, AWF’s vice president for species protection. Kenya for its part has formed a multiagency force to curb poaching while increasing funding and ranger numbers, while Tanzania recently approved a new wildlife protection strategy.

### Role for AWF

To help supplement these efforts, AWF has continued to fund critical elephant protection work through its US\$10 million Urgent Response Fund. For example, AWF is supporting the Protected Area Management Support (or PAMS) Foundation to protect about 1,500 elephants that travel the Selous–Niassa

*Continued on page S2*





AWF is supporting the equipping and training of scouts in southern Tanzania and other elephant poaching hotspots. Up to 35,000 elephants are being poached annually to supply the illegal wildlife trade.

The AWF-trained detection dogs and handlers have already gone to work in Mombasa, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania—two trafficking hubs.

*Continued from page S1*

wildlife corridor between southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique. This grant from AWF allows PAMS Foundation to purchase a much-needed field patrol vehicle, procure patrol equipment and undertake joint patrols on both the Tanzanian and Mozambican sides of the Ruvuma River.

The protection comes none to soon, with DNA sampling by an independent research team having recently confirmed that more than 85 percent of savanna elephant ivory seized between 2006 and 2014 came from Selous Game Reserve and Niassa Reserve. A 2014 countrywide elephant census found that Tanzania's Selous-Mikumi ecosystem experienced a 66 percent decline in its elephant population since 2009.

Southern Tanzania is not the only part of the country being hit by elephant poaching. The Tanzanian elephant census found a 76 percent reduction of the elephant population in the central Tanzania ecosystem of Ruaha-Rungwa, compared to 2009. Here, AWF is working with Wildlife Conservation Society to establish an aerial surveillance program in the game reserves

surrounding Ruaha National Park. AWF funding will equip and train the scouts, further enhancing law enforcement capacity.

Meanwhile, AWF recently graduated its first class of sniffer dogs through its Conservation Canine Program. Eight detection dogs, plus 13 handlers from Kenya Wildlife Service and Tanzania's Wildlife Division, underwent two months of training where they learned how to search vehicles, buildings and other areas for ivory.

After decamping to an interim facility to acclimatize to new work conditions, the teams were deployed to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Mombasa in Kenya to patrol their airports and seaports. The two cities are considered key export hubs through which smuggled ivory often passes.

"The use of sniffer dogs is a big score for law enforcers and a huge deterrent for illegal traffickers," said Faustin Masalu, Wildlife Division Head of Anti-Poaching, at the July graduation ceremony. "Illegal traffickers

will not be safe at any point, particularly at checkpoints."

The deployment of these dogs is being coupled with judicial training in key wildlife export or transit hubs. Already trainings of prosecutors have taken place in four locations in Kenya; two locations in Ethiopia; in Kampala, Uganda; and in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### Signs of progress

Demand remains a critical component of the wildlife trade, but here, too, we are seeing signs of progress. In February, China, one of the largest demand countries of ivory, instituted a one-year ban on carved ivory imports. The government followed up with an ivory crush event in May, during which a representative made statements that seemed to indicate the country would eventually close its legal domestic ivory trade—a trade that conservationists have argued provides cover for the illegal trade.

To be sure, there is still a ways to go in completely shutting down the wildlife trafficking industry. And it hasn't all been good news in efforts to fight wildlife





A teal ivory crusher (which appears near the bottom right corner of this photo) played a starring role in the New York Times ivory crush this past June.

trafficking (see “Year of Progress” on page S4). But all signs point to progress, no matter how incremental. In July, during a much-publicized visit to Kenya, U.S. President Barack Obama announced a move to tighten regulations around the United States’ own ivory trade. The new regulations would prohibit the sale of African ivory across state lines and restrict commercial exports, with limited exemptions. This follows months during which many individual states worked to pass their own legislation banning ivory sales. New York, New Jersey and California are among those that have been successful.

Most recently, during Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to the United States in September, President Obama and President Xi committed to “take significant and timely steps to halt the domestic commercial trade of ivory” in their respective countries.

As AWF CEO Patrick Bergin observed, “We are starting to see a shift in perceptions about our relationship with the natural world.” ■

## Hometown Pride

*Leveraging its long history in Africa, AWF partners with WildAid to launch a public awareness campaign in Tanzania around the poaching crisis*

**W**hen we look back on it years later, maybe June 2015 will have been the turning point for Tanzania. That was when the results of a countrywide elephant census came out, revealing a 60 percent decline in Tanzania’s elephant population between 2009 and 2014. The same month, a paper published in the journal “Science” revealed that the East African country is one of two elephant poaching hotspots in Africa.

But June was also the month a new public awareness campaign began in Tanzania, urging citizens to take pride in their natural heritage and help prevent the poaching of elephants and other wildlife.

“Elephants are at the top of the wish list for most tourists who come to this country, and tourism generates over 12 percent of our gross domestic product,” said Hon. Lazaro Nyalandu, Tanzania’s Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, who spoke at the campaign launch event. “My government is determined to stop the slaughter. But we cannot do it alone. We want to enlist the help of all of our citizens in our efforts to stop the theft of our national heritage.”

### Pride in elephants

Admittedly, a public awareness campaign will not singlehandedly stop the poaching of elephants. But, as we’ve seen with our public awareness efforts in Asia, there is undoubtedly an impact. In a 2014 survey of nearly 1,000 residents from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, 70.6 percent of respondents believed elephant poaching was a problem—an increase of 51.5 percent from a similar survey from 2012, when our Asia campaign was just beginning.

Music artist Alikiba is one of several African celebrities that have signed on to AWF’s public awareness campaign in Tanzania.

The Tanzanian Wildlife Pride Campaign was launched by AWF, with the same partner from our Asia efforts, WildAid. It features national celebrities and cultural icons, who can convey to the public the severity of the poaching crisis through Swahili-language radio and television, social media, newspapers and magazines, billboards and videos. Bearing a tagline of “*Ujangili Unatumiza sote* (Poaching steals from us all),” the campaign seeks to mobilize Tanzanians to advocate for greater protection of their elephants and other species, and protect them from the illegal wildlife trade.

A survey conducted by AWF and WildAid found that Tanzanians already take great pride in their elephants. Of the 2,000 citizens surveyed in both rural and urban areas, more than 73 percent said that they associated wildlife with their national identity and heritage.

“I’m honored to lend any support that I can to this campaign. Our beautiful elephants must be allowed to live, free and wild, instead of ending up as a carving on somebody’s coffee table,” said musical entertainer Alikiba, one of the first ambassadors for the program. ■

To view Alikiba’s PSA, visit [awf.org/alikiba](http://awf.org/alikiba)



# Year of PROGRESS

*This year has included both victories and setbacks in the global fight against the illicit wildlife trade, from record seizures to record wildlife losses. Following are the highlights from the first half of 2015.*

## Bad News

**22:** S.African government announces a record 1,215 rhinos had been poached in 2014.



**23:** Ahead of Kasane Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade, CITES confirms 2014 elephant poaching rates remained similar to 2013.

**24:** S.Africa hears expert testimony on legalising rhino horn trade.



**26:** Census shows Mozambique has lost ~10,000 elephants in 5 years.

**28:** Wildlife contraband seized by Mozambican authorities is stolen from police custody.

**2:** Census shows Tanzania's elephant population has declined 60% in 5 years.



**JANUARY**

**FEBRUARY**

**MARCH**

**APRIL**

**MAY**

**JUNE**

## Good News



**27:** China issues 1-year ban on ivory imports.

**3:** Kenya burns 15 tonnes of confiscated ivory.

**18:** Alleged ivory kingpin Feisal Mohammed Ali is denied bail in Kenya, in reversal of an earlier decision.

**20:** Ethiopia burns 6.1 tons of ivory.

**20:** Thai customs seizes 4 tonnes of tusks en route from Democratic Republic of the Congo to Laos.

**25:** Thai customs seizes 3 tonnes of ivory headed to Laos from Kenya.

**30:** Congolese government burns 5 tonnes of ivory.



**14:** Mozambique seizes 1.3 tonnes of elephant ivory and rhino horn in the city of Matola.

**19:** Singapore seizes \$6 million of illegal ivory, its biggest ivory seizure in a decade.

**5:** Kenyan tycoon Abdurahman Mohammed Sheikh arrested in connection to Singapore seizure.

**7:** Illegal shipment of nearly 1 ton of ivory bound for Singapore seized in Uganda.

**19:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service crushes 1 ton of ivory in New York's Times Square.

**27:** Census reveals Uganda's elephant population has risen 600% in 5 years.

**29:** China crushes ivory and makes announcement that appears to promise a phasing out of its legal domestic ivory trade.







# Cecil's Legacy

*One lion's death in Zimbabwe sheds light on the plight of all of Africa's lions*

Lions such as this one face an uncertain future in Africa—a fact brought to light when the hunting death of Cecil the lion caused a global uproar.

Björn Persson / Wildlife Photographer / bjornpersson.nu

Every once in a while, an individual catapults into public consciousness and becomes an icon for a movement. That's what happened to Cecil this past July.

Cecil was a 13-year-old male lion that resided largely in Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. A favorite of safari guides, Cecil was a tourist attraction in his own right at Hwange. He was also part of a long-term study being conducted by researchers at the University of Oxford.

In early July, Cecil was reportedly lured out of Hwange with bait, then shot with a crossbow by an American hunter named Walter Palmer. The lion survived another 40 hours, until Palmer and his guides found and shot him with a firearm. Cecil was skinned and his head removed as a trophy for the hunter to bring back home.

It took a few weeks for the incident to become public knowledge outside of Zimbabwe, but by late July, an international uproar had erupted over the killing. The general public appeared incensed about the tragic circumstances surrounding Cecil's death, and people additionally worried about the fate of the 12 cubs Cecil had left behind.

There was also some question as to the legality of the hunt. Though all signs point to Palmer having legally purchased the hunt, the local landowner reportedly did not possess a permit for a lion to be hunted on his land.

Palmer, a Minnesota dentist and avid hunter who reportedly paid US\$50,000 for the Zimbabwe hunt, received such a flood of hate messages that he temporarily closed his dental practice and went into hiding. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which oversees the import of hunting trophies, reportedly took up investigation on the matter. And Zimbabwean authorities began calling for Palmer's extradition to Zimbabwe to face criminal charges—a move apparently supported by more than 100,000 Americans through a petition submitted to the White House.

## Rapidly declining numbers

As of this writing, Palmer's Zimbabwean hunting guide, Theo Bronkhorst, is awaiting trial on charges of failing to prevent an illegal hunt. (In a surprising turn of events, Bronkhorst was later arrested in mid-September for allegedly attempting to smuggle 29 sable antelope

to South Africa.) The local landowner will soon report to court on a lesser charge of having allowed a hunt on his land without the requisite permits. Palmer has returned to work in Minnesota. There has been no further news of whether he will face any charges in Zimbabwe.

As for Cecil's cubs, they are now being protected by his brother, Jericho.

But Cecil's legacy is perhaps even greater than just his bloodline. Africa's lion population has dropped 42 percent in the past 21 years, largely due to human-carnivore conflict, fragmented habitat and a dwindling prey base. Until Cecil's death, however, there had been little notice of the rapidly declining lion numbers.

"If there is any positive aspect to this tragedy, it's that Cecil's death has shone a spotlight on the extraordinary threats that face lions in Africa," explains Philip Muruthi, AWF's senior vice president for species protection. "It is too late to save Cecil, but the world still has time to save his brethren." ■

*Check out one of the ways AWF is helping to protect lions: [awf.org/mara-lions](http://awf.org/mara-lions)*



Continued from page 1

The experience underscores the need for conservation intervention if great apes, elephants and other large mammals are to survive in Dja and elsewhere across Central Africa. Africa's great ape populations are already doing poorly: All four of the great ape species found in Africa are endangered or critically endangered. Causes include bushmeat hunting, deforestation and the transfer of disease from humans.

In Cameroon, AWF has been partnering with the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife for quite a few years, providing training and equipment in ecological monitoring in Dja as well as in Faro, Boubou N'Djida and Campo Ma'an National Parks. Thus immediately after the Dja Walk, Dupain was able to meet with representatives from the Ministry to discuss how best to address the poaching and lack of wildlife in the World Heritage Site. In general, however, a number of significant barriers exist to working in Central Africa: Vast, remote locations with little infrastructure. Limited oversight by the national government. Limited capacity.

In an increasing number of places, insecurity adds another complicating factor. Take Bili-Uele. Despite being the largest complex of protected areas in northern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bili-Uele lacks any presence by the Congolese wildlife authority, *Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature* (ICCN). "No single conservation or protection activity is happening here," says Dupain. Until the 1990s, little was even known about this area.

In 2012, AWF supported researcher Cleve Hicks in conducting biodiversity surveys in the complex, which found that Bili-Uele has the largest population of eastern chimpanzees on the continent, as well as a sizeable forest elephant population. Unfortunately, the threats to the wildlife are sizeable too. The ivory trade has reportedly decimated an elephant population that was once in the tens of thousands. Artisanal mining, particularly for gold, is destroying the ecosystem, while pastoralists—with poachers amongst them—freely enter the complex with their livestock herds.

A year ago, AWF would not have had the funding to begin conservation actions here. Nor would we have had the expertise to deal with the regional insecurity. The chimps and forest elephants share their forest habitat with small factions of the Lord's Resistance Army. In mid-January, 10 people were kidnapped about 35 km from Bili-Uele by a suspected faction of this rebel group. In April, the Congolese army was ambushed by the Lord's Resistance Army in a town 112



AWF led a trek (above) across the Dja Faunal Reserve, a World Heritage Site that is not regularly traversed by people—except, perhaps, by poachers looking to hunt bushmeat.

km northwest of the protected area complex, near the border shared with the Central African Republic. (See also "Kidnapped girls return" on page 3.)

Now, however, member support—and a partnership forged with Maisha Consulting, a company experienced in implementing protected-area work in war or semi-war zones—is making it possible for AWF to move forward in this critical ecosystem. We have identified a core area of 10,000 sq. km to focus our protection and monitoring. The Bili-Mbomu Forest Savanna Mosaic is a span of untouched habitat that transitions from savanna along the Mbomu River in the north to the forest along the Bili River in the south. This area boasts high levels of biodiversity, low levels of habitat destruction and the highest potential for effective protection as compared to the rest of the complex.

AWF has already opened an office nearby and coordinated with ICCN to hire a conservator for the protected area. The partners have also met with local communities to discuss planned interventions. While relationships between the locals and outside groups have not always been positive, "they really support the idea of having a permanent ICCN/AWF

presence in Bili to improve security in the region," relates Dupain.

### Other benefits

Beyond improved security, the community stands to benefit in other ways. AWF and Maisha have assisted ICCN in selecting and training potential park rangers for Bili-Mbomu, with half coming from the local communities. Rangers were selected per existing ICCN criteria, then given training on a range of topics, including understanding and applying Congolese wildlife law, preventing ambushes (see "Ensuring Security" on page 6) and using handheld technologies for improved anti-poaching and ecological monitoring.

"If all goes as planned, about 20 to 30 ICCN ecoguards will be patrolling and securing at least the southern 30 percent of the Bili-Mbomu core area by the end of 2015," says Dupain. "For the first time, this area will be actively managed and an important population of chimpanzees and elephants will be protected from human activity."

With all the challenges here, it's not expected to be the ultimate cure for what ails Bili-Mbomu or other protected areas in Central Africa. But, like the Dja Walk in Cameroon, it is, perhaps, a start. ■

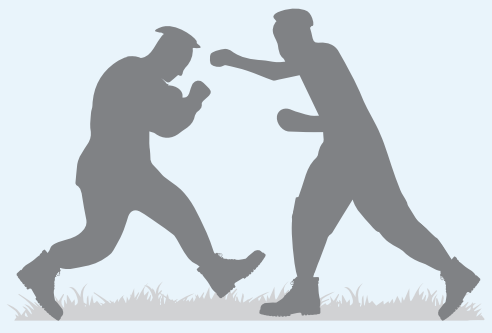


# Enhancing Security

*In Central Africa, ranger training involves more than learning how to recognize and track wildlife—and for good reason*

Rebel groups, poachers, wildlife... it's all part of the job for a wildlife ranger in Central Africa. AWF therefore partnered with security firm Maisha Consulting to provide security training to rangers in Cameroon's Bouba N'Djida National Park and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Bili-Mbomu Forest Savanna Mosaic.

Drills and simulations ensure rangers are prepared for any eventuality—and has the added benefit of enhancing security not only for wildlife in protected areas but also for the people living in these remote areas. Here's what a typical security training might entail.



## Operational discipline

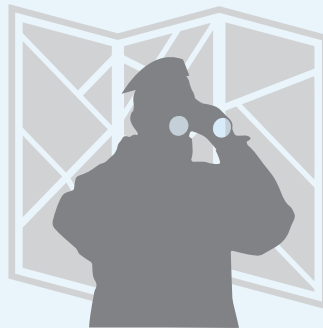
Simulated emergency situations take place unexpectedly throughout the training, requiring rangers to complete logistical and operational tasks in a limited timeframe. This more readily mimics real-world conditions while ensuring that teamwork develops quickly amongst the participants.

## Combat first aid

Rangers learn how to perform simple life-saving procedures under combat situations, including how to reach a wounded comrade in combat and evacuate him or her to safety, as well as when and how to use CPR, tourniquets and other basic first aid.

## Hand-to-hand combat

This module is ultimately a confidence-building exercise. Rangers are taught how to overcome their fear of pain and use their bodies to neutralize their opponents. After learning basic techniques, drills eventually involve full-contact combat (using protective gear).



## Camouflage

For situations where patrols must conduct an ambush, rangers learn how to leave minimal tracks and blend into the vegetation. This also allows them to safely conduct observations around the major routes used by poachers.

## Navigation

Even tasks such as map reading and field navigation can have a security element to them. Rangers are taught how to "read" their terrain and use it to their tactical advantage.

## Tactical training

Drills reinforce basic law enforcement functions, such as making an arrest and handcuffing a suspect. Other training involves how to conduct an ambush, how to react to a close-range contact and how to use roadblocks.



# Wildlife Watch *Namaqua Chameleon*

Unlike the chameleons we often think of, the Namaqua chameleon is neither brilliantly colored nor much of a tree climber. This species is a grounded soul, walking the Namib Desert and other arid and semi-arid areas in the western parts of Southern Africa. Like other chameleons, however, the Namaqua can change color, going from black during cooler times of day (to better absorb heat) to a lighter gray or brown when temperatures rise.

The Namaqua chameleon boasts a number of other adaptations to its desert habitat. It excretes salt from its nasal glands to enhance

water conservation. It digs holes to get to cooler sand. And it may fully straighten its legs—what’s called “stilting”—to lift itself farther from the hot ground. Meanwhile, because this chameleon doesn’t need to grip tree limbs, its tail is neither particularly long nor prehensile.

The Namaqua chameleon appears to be an equal-opportunity eater, hunting down insects, small snakes and lizards—even younger Namaqua chameleons if need be.

It is prey to jackals, hawks and eagles, plus dogs and cats in areas populated by people.

The species is categorized as of “least concern” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (or IUCN’s) Red List of Threatened Species. That said, the Namaqua chameleon has been harvested from the wild to supply the pet trade. There are also some concerns that over time, climate change will negatively alter its habitat. Until then, this chameleon will keep on trucking—er, walking. ■



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### WEB

## NY Ivory Crush takes off

In June, AWF helped sponsor the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s ivory crush in New York City’s Times Square, where 1 ton of confiscated ivory was destroyed (see the supplement between pages 4 and 5). To involve those who were unable to attend the event, AWF launched a pledge encouraging individuals to take an oath to never buy or sell ivory products. Our social media messages reached more than

1.4 million people, and had hundreds of thousands of supporting messages. Among those sending out messages of support were prominent celebrities like Virgin Unite’s Richard Branson, models Veronica Varekova and Natasha Barnard, and actresses Briana Evigan and Shannon Elizabeth.

**You, too, can take the pledge and be part of the movement: [awf.org/crushtheivory](http://awf.org/crushtheivory)**



### VIDEO

## Wildlife on camera

AWF’s Vine account is filled with videos of wildlife hamming it up on camera—proving that Africa’s wildlife is not camera shy! Check it out—and we bet you’ll find yourself laughing at all of their antics.

**Join AWF on Vine: [awf.org/vine](http://awf.org/vine)**

### WEB

## Students celebrate World Giraffe Day

At the AWF-supported Lupani Conservation Primary School in the Kazungula landscape, students celebrated World Giraffe Day this June by learning about the giraffe and its conservation status, making giraffe masks and drawing the long-necked creature’s likeness. The day of fun closed on a serious note, with the students solemnly pledging to protect giraffes, natural resources and other wildlife.

**See a gallery of photos from the celebration: [awf.org/giraffe-day](http://awf.org/giraffe-day)**

