



AFRICAN WILDLIFE  
FOUNDATION

SPRING 2019

# AFRICAN WILDLIFE

## News

23 MOUNTAIN GORILLA BABIES NAMED IN RWANDA

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Photographer Billy Dodson*

YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK ACROSS AFRICA'S LANDSCAPES



Our mission is to ensure wildlife and wild lands thrive in modern Africa.

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Graphic & Multimedia Design Officer

**KENYA - HEADQUARTERS**

Ngong Road, Karen  
P.O. Box 310, 00502  
Nairobi  
Phone +254 (0) 711 063000  
Fax +254 20 2765030

**UNITED STATES**

1100 New Jersey Avenue SE, Ste. 900  
Washington, DC 20003  
Toll Free +1 888 494 5354  
Phone +1 202 939 3333  
Fax +1 202 939 3332

**UNITED KINGDOM**

P.O. Box 74158  
London SE24 4BT  
Phone +44 7981 183 103

africanwildlife@awf.org

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# GOOD NEWS TO SHARE



*Dear friends of African wildlife,*

While news of Africa is often daunting and — sometimes downright depressing — it is the successes that keep the staff of AWF uplifted and hopeful. We are fortunate to have a staff of committed and passionate people — all devoted to conservation, the continent, the people and the animals. They work tirelessly to preserve wild lands and wild animals in a thriving, modern Africa. And their work is paying off.

Last fall, representatives from both NGOs and governments met to discuss illegal wildlife trafficking. This has become a global problem and, while horrible in terms of depleting species, the trade also feeds terrorism, drug trafficking, and other criminal enterprises. AWF made a commitment to raise \$25 million over the next four years to help eradicate this nefarious trade. (See page 3.)

In our continued battle with poaching and trafficking we are now training women as rangers. Women have a strong sense of and understanding of community, and they are committed to saving animals on behalf of the community. (See page 3.)

Please be sure to check out the wonderful wildlife and other pictures throughout this newsletter, including photos from the 2018 Kwita Izina in Rwanda. Always a joyous celebration, 2018's was especially so because, for the first time, mountain gorilla numbers have edged past 1,000! Please also take the time to review the stunning photographs from AWF friend and wildlife photographer Billy Dodson, who recently published a book featuring some of his most unforgettable shots and, in his typical generous fashion, is donating proceeds to AWF.

We continue to be hopeful and work hard to protect elephants, rhinos, giraffes, lions, and other iconic African wildlife. We are committed to saving the continent's amazing natural heritage for future generations to enjoy.

With continued appreciation for your support,

Heather Sturt Haaga  
Chair, Board of Trustees





# OWNING THE FIGHT

The Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) conference held in London last fall helped address the need for collaboration at every level of law enforcement and among different private, public, and NGO sectors. The conference was organized around three key themes: tackling trafficking as a serious organized crime, building coalitions, and closing markets. More than 50 countries had signed a declaration committing to protect species, and some countries pledged specific commitments designed to help end IWT.

AWF pledged \$25 million over the next four years to support African governments and local communities in anti-IWT. The funds will help build African leadership and ownership of the anti-trafficking agenda, protect habitats and key

populations of rhinos, elephants, great apes, large carnivores and giraffes, and strengthen prosecutorial and judiciary capacity to put perpetrators behind bars.

Since 2014, AWF has invested \$13.1 million to counter the illegal wildlife trade in Africa and implemented a further \$5.5 million with public-sector partners. The combined \$18.6 million has been used to directly support anti-poaching efforts on the ground, strengthen prosecutorial and judiciary processes, place detection dogs in critical transit points, and launched successful public awareness campaigns to stop the demand for illicit wildlife goods in Asia.



*AWF pledged **\$25 million** over the next four years to support African governments and local communities in the fight against illegal wildlife trafficking.*

## On the Case for African Wildlife: Women Rangers

Ludovika Malemba knows the rugged hills and dusty tracks of LUMO Community Wildlife Sanctuary like the back of her hand.

As one of only three female wildlife scouts in LUMO, she's patrolled many kilometers of the community-owned conservancy since its establishment in 2001. A native of the vast wildlife-rich landscape in Taita-Taveta connecting Kenya's Tsavo conservation area and Mkomazi National Park in Tanzania, she found her calling close to home.

The scouts play a vital role at the front line of conservation, enforcing laws that regulate resource use in the conservancy while also responding to incidents of human-wildlife conflict. Aware that LUMO's scouts needed additional know-how and technology to tackle or, better yet, prevent encroachment on the

protected area, AWF recently sponsored training at the Kenya Wildlife Service Law Enforcement Academy in Tsavo. Malemba earned the best academic scores out of the 60 conservancy scouts enrolled. Apart from sharpening their understanding of local grazing laws and group conservancy regulations, scouts gained new skills such as bushcraft and first aid.

Malemba admits that juggling a physically demanding full-time job with her responsibilities as a mother of four is challenging. However, in the field, she says, all scouts are equal. Tasks are rotated fairly between the 11 men and two women on her team — on any given day, one can likely find Malemba guarding the conservancy gate, conducting a patrol, or in the radio room.



"We have been doing a lot of work — and very risky work," says Malemba, but community wildlife scouts are finally getting the technical training and financial support they need. The recognition of professionals like Malemba and her colleagues at LUMO is long overdue — both for community development and wildlife conservation. She smiles as she says, "Now I'm very happy."



## What's in a name?

Rwanda celebrated one of the best stories in conservation late last year in its 14th annual Kwita Izina — the annual gorilla baby-naming ceremony that's become one of the world's largest and most joyful conservation celebrations.

AWF's Senior Vice President Craig Sholley relates the significance and history of Kwita Izina and the conservation context of this annual celebration:

*"With fewer than 300 mountain gorillas remaining in the 1980s, the birth of a baby was a huge victory for the rangers and conservation experts dedicated to protecting this critically endangered great ape in its natural habitat. They bestowed the newborn mountain gorilla with a name inspired by the circumstances of the birth, mirroring an age-old naming tradition embedded in Rwanda's cultural tapestry.*

*While giving baby mountain gorillas a unique identity assisted researchers to monitor each individual in its family group, the newly named gorillas were also a prized symbol of Rwanda's success in conservation...*

*One of the baby mountain gorillas was ... named "Inkingi," meaning "pillar," a nod to the immense value of this endangered great ape to Rwanda's tourism industry. At the same*

*ceremony, the equivalent of "Visit Rwanda" was a name for another newborn. Over the years, many of the infant mountain gorillas have been given symbolic names that capture their strength to survive. "Umuhate," which translates to "bravery" in Kinyarwanda, was named at the 13th Kwita Izina ceremony alongside another young gorilla called "Kwigira," meaning "self-reliance."*

*With more than half of this population habituated in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park, Kwita Izina honors the newborn mountain gorillas to celebrate a win for intensive conservation over the years and plan for a bright future as the species recovers."*

The mountain gorillas got a little more room to roam in early 2018, when AWF donated 27 hectares to expand Volcanoes National Park, a mountain gorilla stronghold. The expansion was partly funded by the family of AWF Trustee Donald Gray, whose daughter Alexa attended Kwita Izina and had the honor of naming a baby. She chose "Kunesha," meaning "to win."

There was even more to celebrate than the 23 gorillas born in 2017-2018. The latest census, released this past spring, showed the total population of mountain gorillas has

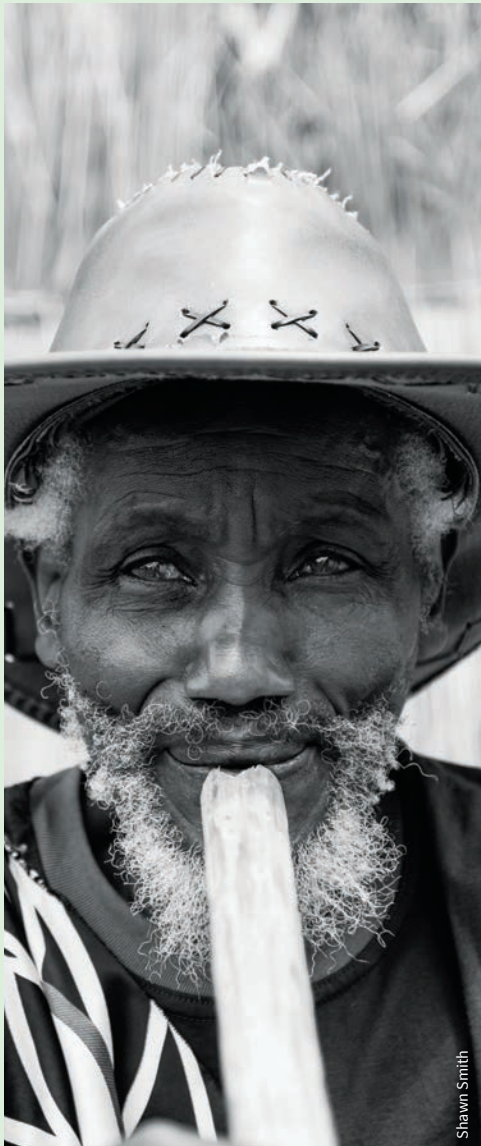
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*mountain gorilla babies were named at the 14th annual Kwita Izina in Rwanda.*

surpassed 1,000, the most ever recorded in the Virunga Mountains, a transboundary habitat spanning the forested highlands of Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The survey was conducted by 12 skilled teams covering more than 2,000 kilometers of forested terrain in the Virungas. The teams found the Virunga mountain gorilla population rose to 605 individuals in 41 social groups; the 2010 survey found 480 individuals living in the Virungas.

These successes wouldn't be possible without the support of people like you who care so deeply about wildlife.





## China reverses decision to lift ban on TIGER & RHINO PARTS

China received international condemnation in October 2018 after announcing that “qualified doctors in qualified hospitals” would be allowed to use rhino and tiger parts from captive animals in medical research and healing. This policy reversed a 25-year-old strict ban and would have put a new, almost unimaginable level of threat upon the world’s last rhinos.

There was an immediate and swift backlash from the global conservation community. Presumably in response to the international outcry, China reversed its decision two weeks later, saying it would postpone any new directive allowing trade and medical use. More recently, China said it will maintain a strict ban on the sale of rhino and tiger parts.

“Demand for rhino horn is killing more than 1,000 rhino each year,” said Philip Muruthi, AWF vice president of species protection. “The rhino horn trade is currently disallowed by CITES and should remain so.” AWF commends China for their continued leadership in the fight against the ivory trade.

## Raising awareness among ZOO VISITORS IN BEIJING

A visually-rich installation containing images of elephants and other African wildlife, along with messages about the value of conservation, adorned the walls of an exhibit hall at one of the world’s largest zoos in November, thanks to a partnership between AWF and the Beijing Zoo.

The “Save the African Endangered Species” exhibit, which ran from September through early November, furthers AWF’s efforts to raise awareness to reduce consumer demand in China for illegal wildlife products such as ivory and rhino horn. This demand fuels poaching, which is a leading threat to elephants, rhinos, lions, great apes, pangolins, and other endangered species.

The Beijing Zoo receives up to 200,000 visitors per day, and the partnership offers AWF a tremendous opportunity to mitigate the threats facing Africa’s iconic wildlife, and the role China can play in curbing the illegal wildlife trade.

The zoo hosted a grand exhibit opening with a performance by Ugandan dancers and special guests including representatives from the Kenya and Ethiopian embassies in China. The zoo’s director, Xiaoguang Li, and AWF Trustee Gordon Cheng led the ceremonies.



## Wildlife Watch: HYRAX

The hyrax closely resembles a rodent with its stocky body, plump head, slender legs, and small ears, but in fact, because of its teeth and bone structure, it is more closely related to the elephant and manatee. These creatures are truly unique and classified in an order of their own, *Hyracoidea*. There are four species of hyraxes, also called “dassies” or rock rabbits, native to Africa.

Bush and rock hyraxes live in large social groups among rocks and are diurnal mammals, meaning they are most active during the day. In contrast, tree hyraxes are solitary, nocturnal, and arboreal—they live in trees.

All hyraxes eat a mostly herbaceous diet, favoring grasses, buds, shoots, berries, and

fruits. Adult hyraxes can grow between 12 to 20 inches and usually weigh 9 to 11 pounds, with an average lifespan of about 8.5 years.

Hyraxes are excellent climbers, thanks to their special rubbery pads and sweat glands on their feet, small hooves on their first and third digits on their hind feet, and a clawed middle digit. Pythons, eagles, and large cats are their natural predators, but hyraxes also fall victim to snares for their skin and meat.

Thanks to our dedicated AWF members like you, our conservation programs to protect hyraxes and other vital wildlife are helping protect these special creatures.

# GET THE PICTURE: Q&A WITH NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER BILLY DODSON

*Nature photographer Billy Dodson, who has been donating images to AWF for years, has compiled his stunning wildlife and landscape images into a new book. "From Desert to Desert: A Journey Through the Heart of Southern Africa," is a personal memoir and photographic study of six distinct countries and regions in sub-Saharan Africa: Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Zambezi River Valley, and Namibia.*



**Q: What first brought you to dedicate yourself to capturing beauty in Africa through photography?**

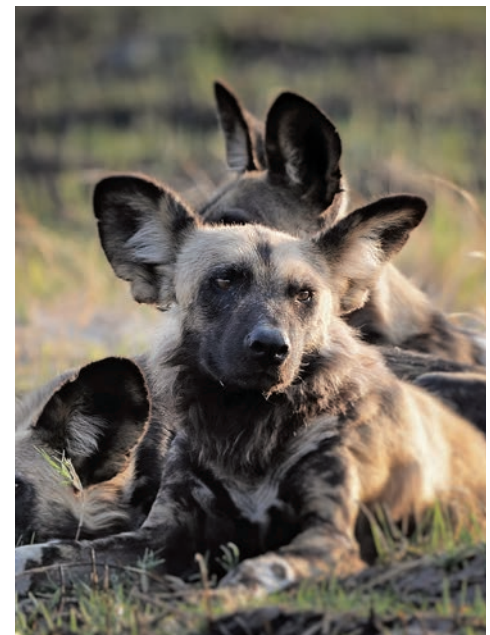
I'd gone to Tanzania on a bit of a lark into 2001 to climb Kilimanjaro. On that trip I fell in love with wild Africa and schemed to find a way to return on something like a regular basis. In the book I describe photography as the "means and excuse" through which I made it happen. On the photographic trips that followed, my love for the place morphed into an obsession.

**Q: You write that as your career blossomed you "inadvertently graduated from photographer to conservationist." What pushed along that transformation?**

I was in Save Valley, Zimbabwe, in 2013 on behalf of AWF. I spent quite a bit of time on the ground with the conservationists and anti-poaching teams there. I came to understand that these were family men, not necessarily well paid, with no life insurance whatsoever. They were on patrol almost every day risking life and limb, and they did it without hesitation or any expectation of acquiring wealth. I mentally shifted gears at that point and resolved to orient all my photo and writing efforts toward conservation.

**Q: What are you going to focus on during your next trip to Africa?**

The next trip is to Ndutu, Tanzania for the migration. I hope to capture the magic of the wildebeest and zebra birthing season, and the diversity of the landscapes in that part of the Serengeti. It has everything ... lakes, woodlands and wide, open plains. The wildlife there is incomparable. I once saw 14 different cheetahs during a 6-day visit.



# Sign on to *help hippos*

Elephant ivory is a high-profile issue, but many people don't know that hippos, too, are poached for ivory. Ivory from hippo teeth is smaller, easier to smuggle, and escapes the growing attention surrounding elephant ivory.

Hippo teeth are cheaper than more recognized sources of ivory and they are also legal to trade. Hong Kong has a limited legal trade in hippo teeth, and the regulations that are in place are loosely enforced and easily exploited.

Want to help hippos? Sign AWF's petition urging the Hong Kong government to broaden its upcoming 2021 elephant ivory ban to include hippo ivory.

[www.awf.org/help-save-hippos](http://www.awf.org/help-save-hippos)



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Did you know you can shop online using Amazon Smile, and a portion of your sale will support AWF's work?

To set it up, go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and select AWF as your charity. Just type "African Wildlife Foundation" into the charity search bar and our listing will appear at the top of the list. The system remembers your charity choice, and then every eligible purchase you make benefits elephants, rhinos and other African wildlife!



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## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Here at AWF, we look forward to receiving letters and artwork from young conservationists. The author of this letter started his very own "Save The World Club" with his brothers "to raise money and donate it to organizations that help protect endangered species." He wrote to us asking for more information about the work we do to protect African wildlife and we were happy to oblige!

