

African Wildlife News

1961-2011



Home to elephants, rhinos, and more, African Heartlands are conservation landscapes large enough to sustain a diversity of species for centuries to come. In these landscapes—places like Kilimanjaro and Samburu—AWF and its partners are pioneering lasting conservation strategies that benefit wildlife and people alike.

Inside THIS ISSUE



page 3

Lodge provides Botswana a persuasive new model for conservation.



page 4

Ivory burning casts dramatic spotlight on elephant poaching problem.



page 6

Why are Samburu warriors protecting predators?



page 8

Warthog vs. 'The Lion King': Find out what's real, and what's fiction.

YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK IN THE AFRICAN HEARTLANDS



AWF CEO Patrick Bergin (center) details AWF's conservation efforts on behalf of rhinos during AWF's 50th Anniversary celebration this summer at Chicago's Brookfield Zoo. Nearly 900 AWF supporters turned out for the event.

A Fête Among Friends... and Animals

AWF Celebrates its Birthday at the Brookfield Zoo

By Kathleen Garrigan

All that separated the black rhino from her admirers was a deep trench, on the other side of which stood African Wildlife Foundation's (AWF's) CEO, Dr. Patrick Bergin. As the pachyderm munched peacefully on a leafy branch, Bergin outlined the threats confronting Africa's rhino population and what AWF was doing to tackle those threats head—or horn—on.

"In this century, the populations of white and black rhinos inched dangerously close to extinction before governments and organizations like AWF intervened," said Bergin. "The recent renewed assault on rhinos reminds us that these animals remain vulnerable in the wild. Captive animals like this one help raise awareness about the continued plight of their species."

Bergin and his audience weren't on safari in Africa but at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, where on July 23, AWF celebrated its 50th Anniversary amid zoo patrons; AWF trustees and members; and the rhinos, zebras, and other animals that call Brookfield home.

(continued on page 8)



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AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

1400 16th Street, N.W.
Suite 120
Washington, D.C. 20036
Toll Free +1 888 494 5354
Phone +1 202 939 3333
Fax +1 202 939 3332
email: africanwildlife@awf.org

AWF Conservation Centre
Ngong Road, Karen
P.O. Box 310, 00502
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone +254 20 2765000
Fax +254 20 2765030

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Ambassadors in Conservation

As I write this, the Horn of Africa is gripped by one of the worst droughts and famines in the region's history. Every day, we hear reports of people abandoning their homes in search of food and better conditions. While the drought is not currently affecting our Heartlands, we continue to monitor the situation closely. This tragedy reminds us why AWF's efforts to safeguard lands outside of protected areas are so critical. Like people, animals need escape routes by which they, too, can access food and better conditions in times of drought and other climatic disruptions.

The drought demonstrates just how devastating the effects of climate change can be. Still, with every project AWF undertakes—be it research on the West African giraffe (see page 7) or the launch of Ngoma Safari Lodge (opposite)—it's clear that humans can also have a positive impact on wildlife.

The recent ivory burning in Kenya, for example, reminds us of the first ivory burning in 1989, when the international community rallied in defense of Africa's largest land mammal to significantly reduce elephant poaching and ivory smuggling. Two decades later, we are again seeing a rise in ivory demand. At the recent burning, AWF President Helen Gichohi reminded the international community the role it can, and should, play as a positive force for wildlife.

Other examples of how humans are positively impacting the land and animals

in Africa can be found in our Samburu Heartland in Kenya, where a unique program has enlisted Samburu *morans*, or warriors, to be our eyes and ears in the bush and in villages as they monitor and help protect the area's lions. Because these warriors live side by side with wildlife, their new role is a natural fit. Even more important, they have become ambassadors for conservation, teaching others in their communities the importance of protecting wildlife, even predators.

Of course, no one is more important in their role as a conservation ambassador than loyal AWF members like you. Together with AWF Board Chair Dennis Keller, I had the pleasure this summer of greeting nearly 900 AWF supporters who attended our special member appreciation day and 50th Anniversary celebration at Chicago's Brookfield Zoo. As our cover story explains, zoos such as Brookfield are crucial conservation partners for us—but you are, too. Not only does your support help us directly in the field, but you also help to educate others every single day about why we need to save the wildlife and wild lands of Africa, and how AWF is going about doing just that.

I can't think of a better place than the Brookfield Zoo to have celebrated our 50 years of conservation success in Africa, and I thank both Brookfield and all of our members for helping us to reach, and celebrate, such a special milestone. Thank you for your crucial role in promoting conservation and AWF.

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

P.S. As a final note, please check out a new video we've posted to our website. A follow-up to our story in the summer issue about the women's enterprises that AWF has helped launch throughout our Heartlands, this video highlights how women in Africa often prove to be a natural voice for conservation.



Conservation ambassadors, such as these members of the Women's Handicraft Association in Kinigi, Rwanda, are featured in a new video on women's enterprises on Awf.org.



John Butler



The First of its Kind in Botswana, Ngoma Lodge Provides Economic, Conservation Benefits

The newly opened Ngoma Safari Lodge in Botswana provides economic benefits to local residents while also securing a critical parcel of land for the wildlife of the densely populated Chobe National Park. Pictured is Wilfred Mufwambi, AWF's regional enterprise manager for southern Africa.

Many things have inspired people to compose a song: love, heartache, memories of times gone by. This, however, may be the first time a lodge was the inspiration.

But then, this is not just any lodge. It's the new Ngoma Safari Lodge, a five-star luxury resort in the Kazungula Heartland that opened this summer. The resort, situated along the Chobe River on the edge of Chobe National Park in northern Botswana, is an AWF-supported conservation enterprise project that provides not only jobs but also ongoing income to the surrounding community.

For some of the 6,000 to 7,000 members of the Chobe enclave, that was enough to inspire a song. "The people here are excited about the lodge; some residents even composed songs about it," explained Wilfred Mufwambi, AWF's regional enterprise manager for southern Africa. "The song includes a line, 'It's the first of its kind of Botswana; let's grab it with both hands.' This is a new model for Botswana, that a community can own such a lodge in this manner, and what residents are seeing now is beyond what they had imagined."

Income From the Start

Ngoma Lodge is a partnership between the residents of the Chobe enclave and Muchenje Safaris, an experienced private safari operator with a record of supporting community development activities. AWF supported the development of the project, from

New Lodge Strikes Right Chord With Community

conducting a management plan that identified opportunities for conservation and poverty reduction to developing the Lodge for Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust.

Because the community owns the land and lodge, the private operator pays the Trust an annual fixed land-rental fee, as well as a percentage of the sales revenue. "Having the fixed land-rental fees ensures the community gets money from the first year," Mufwambi explained. "Residents benefit from even one tourist staying at the lodge."

Conservation Benefits

And what of the conservation benefits? Chobe National Park is densely populated, and its elephant population is particularly high.

"The park by itself does not provide sufficient room for all the wildlife," said Nasson Tembo, director of AWF's Zambezi and Kazungula Heartlands. "Chobe enclave shares a boundary with the national park, so by reserving this land for conservation purposes, we are effectively reducing poaching—while also providing a natural corridor for elephants."

Mufwambi and Tembo suggest, however, that the conservation benefits extend beyond creating a distinct photographic region in the enclave or providing additional space for wildlife to roam. "The ambassadors for conservation are the people who are living with the wildlife," explained Mufwambi. "We are creating incentives for the community to participate in conserving this landscape." ■

"We are creating incentives for the community to conserve this landscape."

— Wilfred Mufwambi, AWF's regional enterprise manager for southern Africa

View the video at awf.org/womensenterprise.

Ivory Burns, in Attempt to Put Heat on International Community



AWF Supports Ivory Burning But Continues Field Work to Conserve Species

Viewing the images, you could almost feel the heat: between 4 to 6 tons of contraband ivory—some 335 tusks and more than 40,000 carvings—set ablaze against the stark landscape of Kenya’s Tsavo East National Park.

Such was the scene on July 20 when, nearly 22 years to the day after the government of Kenya conducted the world’s first public ivory burning, Kenya again hosted a massive public ivory burning to call attention to Africa’s elephant poaching problem. Organized by the member countries of the Lusaka Agreement, a transnational accord that helps protect endangered African wildlife, the event took place on the first African Elephant Law Enforcement Day.

“Through the disposal of contraband ivory, we seek to formally demonstrate to the world our determination to eliminate all forms of illegal trade in ivory,” said Kenya President Mwai Kibaki at the event. “We must all appreciate the negative effects of illegal trade to our national economies. We cannot afford to sit back and allow criminal networks to destroy our common future.”

The ivory burned was part of a shipment that had been seized in Singapore in 2002 by the Lusaka Agreement Task Force and transported to Kenya in 2004 for investigation and storage. Reports estimate that more than 300 elephants would have been killed to produce this shipment. The ivory was estimated to be worth US\$16 million.

AWF supported the ivory burning but stressed the need for action by the international community to halt poaching. “Any meaning [behind this event] will only be symbolic unless it is matched by increased and committed enforcement efforts by national governments,” said AWF President Helen Gichohi, who represented AWF at the burning.

Elephant poaching had dipped following Kenya’s July 1989 ivory burning and the ban that same year by the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) on the international trade of ivory. It is again nearing crisis levels, however. Most experts cite the rising demand from Asia as the cause.

Continued Work

AWF, for its part, has worked for decades to protect Africa’s elephants. One of its early efforts, in 1989, involved a television and print campaign, “Only Elephants Should Wear Ivory,” for which AWF staff traveled the African continent to promote a ban on ivory sales. Since then, the organization has continued its elephant work throughout the African Heartlands, partnering with communities to develop economic incentives that encourage locals to protect elephants, conducting elephant censuses, and securing wildlife corridors to allow for safe elephant migrations.

“Elephants need a lot of room to roam—across borders and outside protected areas—which has caused issues with crop raiding and other instances of human–wildlife conflict,” said Gichohi. “Through land easement plans and other research-based strategies, we have been able to make strides in establishing elephant corridors while securing economic benefits for the people most affected by the species.”

AWF has also appeared on the international stage, when needed, to voice its opinion on the status of the ivory trade. For example, in 2010, Zambia and Tanzania asked CITES to reclassify elephants under Appendix II status, which would allow the legal sale of ivory.

AWF released a statement arguing against such an action. CITES ultimately denied the countries’ request.

Rise in Poaching

At the turn of the 20th century, Africa was reportedly home to a few million elephants. Today, the African elephant population hovers somewhere between 500,000 and 700,000 individuals.

“Ten years ago, we had the luxury of focusing almost exclusively on our field work and research with elephants—poaching and the ivory trade were not at the levels they are at today. Unfortunately, that era has passed. AWF will continue our work, but we call upon other nongovernmental organizations and nations around the world to work with us to halt this continued injustice,” Gichohi said. ■

WORKING FOR ELEPHANTS

While the issues of ivory sales and elephant poaching have drawn heated debate and international action over the years, AWF has continued its field work to conserve the African elephant.

- 1978** The African elephant is listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act.
- 1988** AWF launches its “Save the Elephants” campaign.
- 1989** AWF launches its “Only Elephants Should Wear Ivory” ad campaign. Kenyan government burns 12 tons of ivory to highlight elephant poaching problem. CITES bans the international trade of ivory.
- 1992** Zambian government burns 9 tons of ivory.
- 1998** AWF and Amboseli Elephant Research Project help draft plan to compensate owners for livestock killed by elephants outside the parks. Through the Tarangire Elephant Project, AWF assesses Tarangire elephant population.
- 1999** Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe make a legal one-time ivory sale to Japan. Proceeds go to elephant conservation.
- 2002** Large ivory stockpile seized in Singapore.
- 2004** For the first time, AWF has accurate data on elephants in Zambezi Heartland, showing an 8% population increase from 2001.
- 2008** Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa make one-time ivory sale to China and Japan, per CITES permission.
- 2009** AWF is profiled in *Computersworld* for its use of GPS collars to track elephants and other wildlife.
- 2010** Zambia and Tanzania ask CITES to reclassify elephants to allow the legal sale of ivory. AWF releases statement against the action. CITES denies the countries’ request.
- 2011** Kenya burns ivory in anti-poaching statement. CITES establishes African Elephant Fund, with the goal of raising \$100 million in 3 years for law enforcement, capacity building, and securing elephant populations.

“We have established elephant corridors while securing economic benefits for the people most affected.”
— Helen Gichohi, AWF president

Background image of elephants: Billy Dodson

Forest Library/NGP Awards Winner 2010

Warriors for Wildlife

Ewaso Lions Project Enlists Samburu Morans to Help Protect Area Predators

By Kathleen Garrigan

Rule 1: **Report all wildlife sightings.**

Rule 2: **Investigate human-wildlife conflict and report poaching.**

Rule 3: **Help find lost livestock before the lions do.**

These and other rules of the warrior road were presented by Jeneria Lekilele, a Samburu *moran*, or warrior, at the Carnivore Research and Conservation Workshop held in July in Nairobi. Lekilele is part of a new initiative called Warrior Watch, established by Kenyan wildlife biologist and AWF Charlotte fellow, Shivani Bhalla.

"Jeneria spoke about the Warrior Watch program as if he had given 100 presentations before, and this was only his second time speaking in front of an audience, let alone a room full of major players in Kenyan conservation," said Bhalla, who directs Ewaso Lions, a lion research and conservation project operating in AWF's Samburu Heartland in northern Kenya.

According to Bhalla, Lekilele was instrumental in the development of the program, which launched in 2010. "Being a moran himself, he understands the challenges that morans face in community areas and can identify easily with their needs," she explained.

From Exclusion to Inclusion

Previously, warriors like Lekilele were mostly excluded from conservation efforts. Bhalla and Paul Thomson, co-director of the Ewaso Lions project, saw an opportunity to include the warriors in helping to monitor and protect the area's lion population.

"We realized that warriors were being neglected entirely when it came to wildlife conservation," said Thomson. "Traditionally, the elders within the region are the decision makers. Yet it is the warriors who are the ones who see wildlife the most. It was key that we find a way to include the warriors in the conservation discussion and make them wildlife ambassadors."



Jeneria Lekilele (right) teaches a Samburu *moran* how to use GPS. Warriors in the program are also trained in English and Kiswahili, ecology, data collection, conflict resolution, and tourism.

After allaying the suspicions of warriors who didn't understand why they were being approached by conservationists, and in spite of lingering suspicions by village elders who couldn't comprehend why they should be protecting predators, many of the program's warriors came away from the first discussions enthusiastic about the program. Since then, their ranks have swollen from five to 15.

"They are much more interested in wildlife and eager to participate in research and conservation," said Bhalla. "As they have learned about some of the individual lions, their attitudes have changed positively toward them."

And these positive changes have translated into positive results for lion conservation.

"Since April 2010, we have lost no lions to conflict, and the warriors are all working daily to monitor the known individuals within the conservancies and to ensure their safety," said Bhalla. ■

Ewaso Lions

Looking at Coats Just Part of Conservation Plan

Annual Census, Plus Potential Longer-Term Study, Will Inform Future Giraffe Conservation Efforts

How healthy is the West African giraffe population? Is the giraffes' current habitat in southwestern Niger enough to support the population, or are individuals moving elsewhere? And how can we mitigate the further destruction of their habitat?

These are the questions AWF seeks to answer as it assists its partner, the Association pour Sauvegard des Girafes du Niger, with its annual census of the West African giraffe in the Regional Parc W Heartland. The one- to two-month effort is expected to kick off in November and will involve the local association of community giraffe guides, the Association for the Valorisation of the Ecotourism in Niger (AVEN), manually identifying each giraffe in the animal's distribution range of about 800 sq. km.

"I had a chance to drive around with the guides—it's amazing how they recognize each individual based on their coat patterns," said Jef Dupain, AWF's regional director for West and Central Africa.

After all individuals have been counted, guides compare the findings with the results of previous censuses, offering a more complete picture of the population. The West African giraffe population surged from about 50 individuals in the mid-1990s to up to about 200 more recently, but the species is still listed as

endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

How Best to Protect Habitats

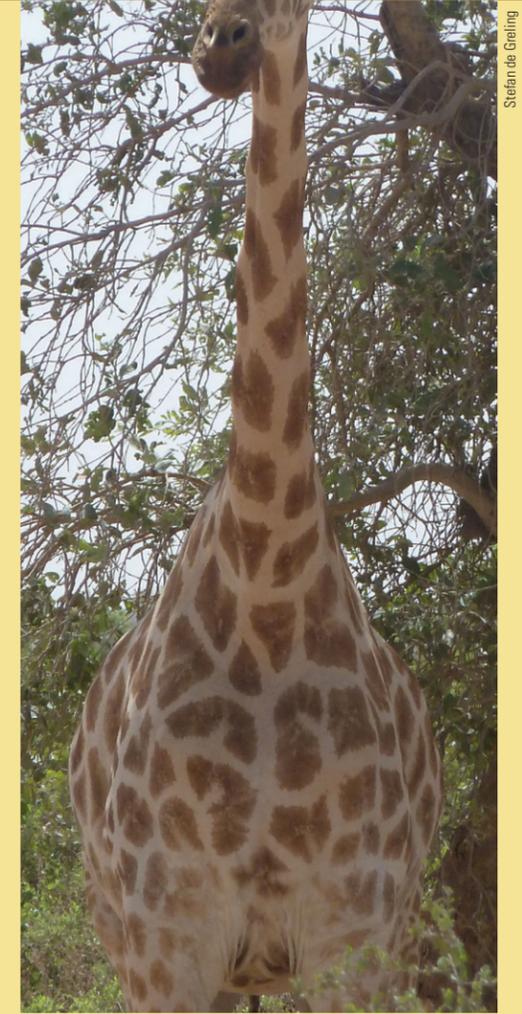
With the government of Niger expected to reinstate its National Giraffe Conservation Strategy, AWF is also evaluating the possibility of a longer-term study of giraffes' ranging patterns. AWF has begun talks with the government of Niger, AVEN, and local universities to potentially collaborate on the project.

"The monitoring project would be quite intensive, with teams in the field really following a small number of giraffes 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Dupain explained, adding that ideally the monitoring would last for up to a full year.

According to Dupain, the habitat of the West African giraffe has suffered rapid degradation, mainly due to the collection of wood for fuel, for local use as well as for sale in the markets in Niamey, only 60 km away.

"So how do we best protect these natural habitats and degraded lands? The results of the long-term study would help determine the best way in which we can move forward on our giraffe conservation efforts," Dupain explained. ■

For more on this species, visit awf.org/giraffes.



Stefan de Greling

AWF will soon assist in the annual West African giraffe census in the Regional Parc W Heartland. Census results, as well as a proposed monitoring project, will help AWF and its partners determine how to protect the giraffe's habitat, which has suffered rapid degradation.

AWF STYLE

Experience the best of Africa, with AWF as your tour guide! AWF is offering two exclusive member safaris for 2012, the family-friendly Best of Northern Tanzania and the Best of Southern Africa. Unlike other trips, AWF's member safaris provide intimate wildlife experiences, where members can discover the wildlife and wild lands of Africa in small groups and also get valuable insight into the conservation challenges and efforts to protect the species and their habitats.

Space is limited, so register now!

Contact Stephen Ham, director of major gifts, at sham@awf.org or 202 939 3318.



Sean Casig

The Best of Northern Tanzania: A Family-Friendly Safari June 23 – July 4, 2012

For those seeking to explore Tanzania, this trip offers an exciting experience for the entire family. Accompanied by an AWF safari leader and local naturalist guides, members will see the unspoiled landscapes of the Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, and Tarangire National Park, and meet some of these areas' most celebrated residents, including lions, elephants, and giraffes.

The Best of Southern Africa July 16 – 26, 2012

Members will begin in the Zambezi region, an AWF Heartland where land and elephant conservation are two top priorities; visit the stunning Victoria Falls; and finally travel to the Okavango Delta's mazelike waterways and South Africa's Kruger National Park to see cheetahs, zebra, rhinos, and more.

For more information on these safaris, visit awf.org/safari.

Dinner and a Movie, with AWF

Disney and Subway have teamed up with AWF to promote Disney's release of "The Lion King" on Blu-ray.™ From now until Dec. 11, 2011, Subway will offer six different reusable "The Lion King" lunch bags in conjunction with its kids' meals. Each kid's meal will also feature a special "The Lion King" toy and include a coupon toward the purchase of a copy of "The Lion King" on Blu-ray.

To educate kids about the real animals portrayed in "The Lion King," Subway



is also featuring animal facts, wallpapers, and videos supplied by AWF on its Subwaykids.com website, as well as a link back to awf.org for those who would like more information on AWF's conservation work in Africa. As AWF's new partner in conservation, Subway will donate \$10,000 to AWF in support of its efforts to protect African wildlife. We want to thank our friends at Disney and Subway for their support of AWF and African conservation! ■

To check out the real animals behind "The Lion King," visit awf.org/subway.

Wildlife Watch

Warthog

In the Disney movie, “The Lion King,” the warthog Pumbaa is a plump, homely creature with a flatulence problem. He leaves a lasting impression on moviegoers—and sings a heckuva duet—but just how much of that cinematic warthog is based in fact, and how much is fiction?

While the warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*) is indeed no beauty queen and can tip the scales at up to 250 pounds, that’s where the similarities between movie and real life end.

The warthog is a member of the pig family and can be found throughout Africa south of the Sahara, particularly in East Africa. The species derives its name from the “warts,” or thick protective pads, that protrude from both sides of its disproportionately large head.

No Beauty Queen

The warthog boasts other distinctive features. It has two sets of tusks: The larger, upper tusks typically curve out to form semicircles on either side of the snout, while the shorter, lower set sprouts from the base of the larger tusks. The

shorter tusks often become sharp from repeatedly rubbing against the upper tusks when the animal opens and closes its mouth. As noted, the warthog will not win admirers for its beauty, but it does sport a rather glamorous long mane of bristles atop its head and back. Shorter bristles are found all over the rest of the body.

While Pumbaa tended to feast on a variety of multicolored bugs in “The Lion King,” the warthog in real life maintains a predominantly vegetarian diet. It is not averse to the occasional earthworm treat, but mostly, the warthog grazes for its food, kneeling on its front legs to eat short grass. It can go for months without drinking, a clear adaptation to living in dry, arid lands, and in the dry season, the warthog uses its large snout and tusks to dig for bulbs, tubers, and roots.

Lacking the protection of fur and fat from temperature changes in its environment, the creature will often make its home in holes abandoned by other animals, which allows it to maintain its core body temperature (a process called thermoregulation.)



Alejandro Tawil

The warthog lives in family groups called “sounders” that consist of one to two females and her young. Males typically live on their own (rather than with a meerkat pal, as Pumbaa does in “The Lion King”), joining these family groups only to mate. While males can aggressively face off during mating, the warthog has a more common defense mechanism. When alarmed, it will grunt, flatten its mane and ears, stick its tail straight up... and bolt for cover. ■

A Fête Among Friends... (Cont'd from cover)

AWF guests donned VIP badges and enjoyed a full day of activities at the zoo, including animal chats held by zookeepers and AWF staff and a special barbeque hosted by AWF Board Chair and Brookfield Zoo Trustee Dennis Keller.

“Brookfield Zoo is a place where people can come to learn about the extraordinary animals that share our planet,” said Keller. “The animals here are ambassadors for their counterparts in the wild. And by educating the public, raising awareness about threats, and supporting organizations like AWF—the conservators in the field—events like this highlight what we all can do to help save species in the wild.”

Stuart Strahl, president and CEO of the Chicago Zoological Society, which operates Brookfield Zoo, agreed: “African Wildlife Foundation and the Chicago Zoological Society share a common mission and vision. We both recognize the need for education and research, as well as the importance of motivating people to protect the world’s threatened wildlife and ecosystems.”

Brookfield Zoo is one of 223 North American zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), which helps zoos

enhance species conservation, education, and science. Through AZA’s Species Survival Program, zoos and aquariums are able to contribute to the conservation of select endangered or threatened species. Over the years, AWF has received support from several zoos, including Brookfield, Indianapolis Zoo, and Woodland Park Zoo.

Partners of All Stripes

The 900 AWF guests who celebrated AWF’s anniversary at Brookfield represent the other part of the conservation equation.

“By educating the public, events like this highlight what we all can do to help save species in the wild.”

—Dennis Keller, AWF board chair and Brookfield Zoo trustee



Jim Schultz/Chicago Zoological Society

“The event was a nice marriage of the zoo environment and AWF’s work,” said Carrie Gleason, whose family attended the Brookfield Zoo event. “The AWF 50th Anniversary video was an incredible showcase of the wildlife and landscapes throughout Africa. It heightened my interest in traveling there and learning more about AWF.”

Keller was heartened to see so many people turn out for the event. “We were delighted to meet members who have supported AWF for many years,” he said. “It’s thanks to them that AWF has achieved so many conservation successes in the past five decades in Africa, and thanks to their ongoing support and partnership, we’re looking forward to continuing this work for the next 50 years and beyond.” ■

To see photos from the event, visit awf.org/brookfieldgallery.