FALL 2012

African Wildlife News

1961–2012

YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK IN THE AFRICAN HEARTLANDS

AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION®

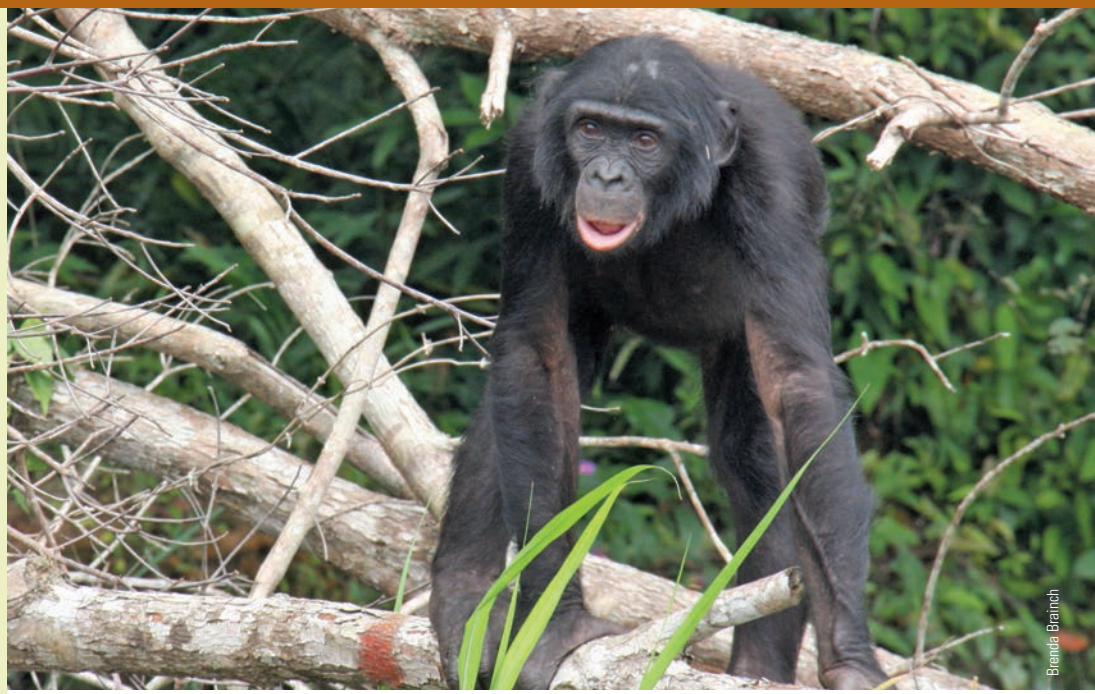
Home to elephants, rhinos, and more, **African Heartlands** are conservation landscapes large enough to sustain a diversity of species for centuries to come. In these landscapes—places like Kilimanjaro and Samburu—AWF and its partners are pioneering lasting conservation strategies that benefit wildlife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

Inside THIS ISSUE

See some of the winners from the Nature's Best photography competition.

AWF introduces the *jiko*, an eco-friendly cook stove, in rural Kenya.

Africa wouldn't be the same without rhinos...



After seeing the community benefits arising from the Lomako–Yokokala Faunal Reserve, members of the Iyondji community requested protection for their bonobos and forests.

Great Ape Receives Gift From Government

New community reserve will lend greater protection to bonobos

By Kathleen Garrigan

Bonobos in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have friends in high places. On April 12, the DRC's Ministry of Environment, Conservation, Nature, and Tourism signed a decree that officially established a portion of the endangered great ape's forested home a protected reserve, giving bonobos—along with forest elephants, the Congo peacock, and other wildlife in the area—a greater level of protection. The new Iyondji Community Bonobo Reserve lies south of the Maringa River and is one of the most pristine forest blocks within AWF's Congo Heartland. Funding support for the project came from Disney's Friends for Change: Project Green, Regina B. Frankenberg Foundation, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As it turns out, bonobos have friends in nearby places, too. The creation of the new reserve was initiated by local communities who appealed to AWF and the government to turn the forested area near them into a community reserve.

"The proposal to convert the Iyondji forests into a conservation area is premised on an ecological justification but also is a result of the expressed interest of the communities living near this area," says AWF Congo Heartland Director Charly Facheux. "The idea for a community reserve originated with the communities, after they learned about our success in gazetting the Lomako–Yokokala Faunal Reserve in partnership with other communities."

(continued on page 6)

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African Wildlife News
is published four times a year.

CFC# 11219

Printed with soy-based ink on recycled paper

Conservation Demands Dedication

Conservation is hard. Even in countries that enjoy abundant resources, well-developed infrastructure, and a strong legislative and judicial system that enforces protection for wildlife and wild lands, conservation is hard.

In Africa, where AWF works in countries with widely contrasting political, social, and economic situations, conservation is even harder. In some of these places, there is a level of infrastructure and political stability—and an active tourism industry—that help sustain our conservation efforts. In others, though, those societal underpinnings are less developed. Oftentimes this means AWF must develop the infrastructure or introduce tourism and other economic opportunities alongside our conservation work. Only with these other investments can we ensure our work will be sustained into the future.

Take the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Africa's second-largest country is home to the largest expanse of tropical rainforest on the continent. Forty-five percent of the country is covered by primary forest, and three of Africa's four great apes—the bonobo, the chimpanzee, and the mountain gorilla—not to mention a number of other unique species like the okapi and the Congo peacock, are found here. But DRC's abundant biodiversity and natural resources stand in contrast with its impoverished population, crumbling infrastructure, and the conflict that continues to plague its eastern provinces. As AWF's Congo Heartland ecologist, Andrew Fowler, says, "Congo is one of the few countries in Africa whose infrastructure seems worse off now than it was several decades ago."

John Butler

In DRC, AWF is working in two landscapes: the Congo Heartland in the north and the Virunga Heartland in the east. Each region presents its own set of challenges. The country's underdeveloped transportation infrastructure makes accessing conservation sites in the Congo Heartland—where the Lomako–Yokokala Faunal Reserve and Iyondji Community Bonobo Reserve are located—a long, arduous journey. When AWF constructed the Lomako Conservation Science Center in 2009, for example, all construction materials had to be brought in by boat, motorbike, and eventually carried on foot by workers.

As the Lomako research program takes off and as more sections of the forest come under official protection (see our cover story), however, AWF will play an important role in helping to develop infrastructure and create economic opportunities where currently there are none.

Paul Thomson

The Democratic Republic of Congo—which suffers from poor infrastructure, such as incomplete roadways, as above, and political instability—is one location where AWF's conservation efforts are a challenge.

A different conservation challenge plagues eastern DRC. This past spring, fighting once again broke out between various rebel groups and the Congolese military, with some rebel groups "occupying" parts of Virunga National Park, home to the critically endangered mountain gorilla. As you'll read in the story opposite this letter, thousands of people fled their homes, while many rangers and their families had to be evacuated. Still, a small but dedicated group of rangers chose to stay behind and have resumed limited patrols to locate and keep an eye on the park's gorillas.

Conservation demands dedication: It takes rangers willing to risk their lives to protect mountain gorillas and ecologists prepared to endure days of traveling—not to mention months of isolation in the forest—to protect bonobos and other wildlife. It takes finding ways around obstacles until you find ways to overcome those obstacles.

Conservation is hard, but through dedication, adaptability, a clear mission, and of course the continued support and commitment of donors like you, we will prevail—as will Africa's wildlife.

Patrick Bergin, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. These days, being a conservationist also means being able to adapt when conditions on the ground change. As we've seen with the continued and relentless poaching of rhinos in South Africa—a middle-income country known for its strong wildlife management—those changes on the ground can happen in the most stable of countries. Please see our special supplement, which details the perils facing Africa's rhinos and what you can do to help them.


RHINOS IN PERIL
A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO AFRICAN WILDLIFE NEWS
AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION
THE BIG FOUR?
Africa wouldn't be the same without rhinos
GRAZERS VS. BROWSERS

Mountain Gorillas Threatened by Conflict


Virunga National Park

Rebel presence in Virunga National Park and the resulting insecurity in the region have prevented rangers from being able to conduct regular monitoring of the mountain gorillas.

Some 200 mountain gorillas living in the Democratic Republic of Congo face uncertainty as fighting flares up in the region

Renewed conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) this spring saw incursions of a rebel army into Virunga National Park, raising concerns for the safety of the people and mountain gorillas that live in the area. Virunga National Park, Africa's oldest national park, is home to approximately 200—one-quarter—of the world's mountain gorillas.

On May 8, a rebel army estimated at 1,500 men crossed into Virunga's Mikeno Sector, where mountain gorillas live. Their unlawful presence in this area, and subsequent sustained fighting with the Congolese Army as the rebel group known as M23, has displaced thousands of refugees.

AWF, through its partner, the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), supports the daily monitoring of seven families of habituated mountain gorillas in DRC. While support from AWF/IGCP normally allows rangers to check on the families daily—ensuring the gorillas are free from snares and safe from poachers—park authorities had to suspend monitoring patrols early on in the conflict because of the dangers to the rangers.

Virunga National Park was able to conduct a limited gorilla monitoring operation in early August, and rangers found four of the six gorilla families—including a new baby in one of the families. "That at least four of the mountain gorilla families are safe is tremendous news, but we do remain concerned about this situation and how it will impact mountain gorilla conservation efforts in the long term," said Craig Sholley, mountain gorilla expert and vice president for philanthropy and marketing at AWF. "Unfortunately, this is one of the challenges of working in politically unstable areas of Africa with long histories of civil unrest." *—Christine Runion* ■

For updates on the rebel situation in Virunga National Park, visit awf.org/igcpsite

The Majesty of Africa, in Pictures

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and nowhere is this more true than with Africa's wildlife and wild lands. Many people may never get to experience this unique continent firsthand, but photography provides a way to educate and enlighten people about just how critical Africa's magnificent species and landscapes are to our future. This is why AWF is proud to again sponsor the "African Wildlife" category in the prestigious Nature's Best Photography Windland Smith Rice International Awards.

Winners from the entire Nature's Best competition, as well as other honorees (a number of which feature African wildlife) are being featured in a special exhibition at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, from March 30 through early January 2013. Here, AWF offers you a look at this past year's winners.

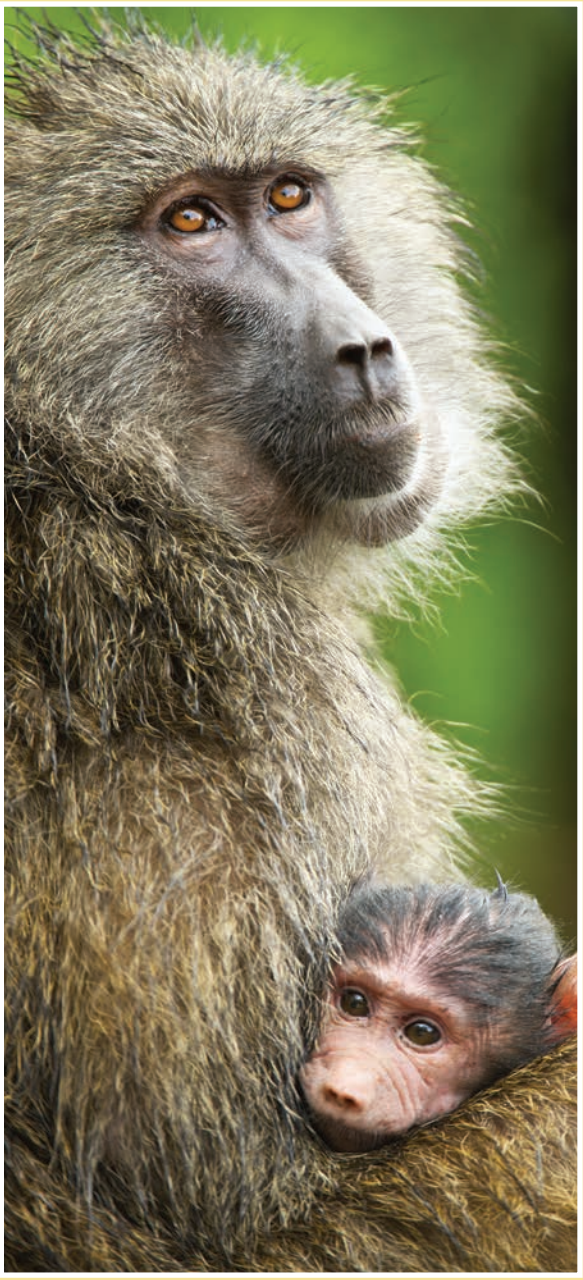
▲ African Lion and Cub

Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Kalahari Desert, South Africa

By Lee Slabber
Cape Town, South Africa

Lee Slabber, who grew up in Cape Town, developed an appreciation of the natural world at a young age. He began using photography to document the many hours he spent exploring the bush, and the hobby eventually became an obsession. Slabber now specializes in photographing the activities and behaviors of animals that live within the harsh Kalahari and other extreme environments.

"I had been following this pride in the Kalahari for a number of days, focusing on one youngster who was always causing trouble. In this image, his father had been trying to sleep. The cub kept climbing over the adult's head until the lion growled to warn it to back off. In a moment of brave defiance, the youngster just glared back at his dad. I loved the display of intimacy."



▲ Olive Baboons

Lake Manyara National Park, Tanzania

By Elliott Neep
Oxfordshire, England

"A mother baboon was cradling her newborn after a heavy downpour. She wrapped up the baby in her arms and legs, protecting it against the cold and damp. It is a behavior I have wanted to photograph for some time, as it displays the bond between a mother and her baby so well. It is an image that people might easily relate to."

▲ Elephant Rescue

Etosha National Park, Namibia

By Susan McConnell
Stanford, Calif., United States

"Baby elephants sometimes tumble into concrete water troughs, remnants of farms in the Etosha region, sending herds into a panic. Here a calf's mother and aunts join forces to kneel down and use their trunks to gently lift the baby to safety."

▲ Hippopotamus

Chobe National Park, Botswana

By Lou Coetzer
Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa

"Of all the animals that I shoot from my custom photography boat in the Chobe River, hippos are the only ones that may attack without provocation. None is more aggressive than a cow protecting her calf from perceived danger, so I backed off after getting a quick photo."

The next Nature's Best Photography Windland Smith Rice International Awards competition is just around the corner! Look for an announcement to submit your own winning photo in January, or visit awf.org/naturesbest

Great Ape Receives Gift *(Cont'd from cover)*

Located in the same landscape as the Lomako Reserve, which AWF helped establish in 2006, the Iyondji Community Bonobo Reserve adjoins the Luo Scientific Reserve, where the most famous bonobo research site—Wamba—is situated and operated by Kyoto University. Together, Lomako (3,625 sq. km), Iyondji (1,100 sq. km), and Luo (500 sq. km) will conserve wildlife and forest resources that have come under increased pressure from hunting and agriculture.

Brenda Brainch

In the new Iyondji reserve, AWF hopes to implement scientific surveying and monitoring to determine the bonobo population there.

"There is a lot of human activity inside the reserve, and this is a problem that needs to be resolved," says Congo Heartland Ecologist Andrew Fowler. He explains many of the communities wanted the reserve to help reduce that activity and its consequent pressure on the forest. The forest's new protected status will also benefit bonobos which, though themselves protected under Congolese national law (making it illegal to hunt them), are nonetheless affected, sometimes adversely, by human activity.

According to Jef Dupain, AWF's technical director of West and Central Africa, ensuring Iyondji, Lomako, and other areas are effectively managed and not merely protected on paper is critical. "With the gazettement of Iyondji, we now have more than 10 percent of AWF's Congo Heartland gazetted as a protected area for the well-being of bonobos and Congo Basin fauna," says Dupain. At the start of the program in 2003, only 0.7 percent was protected.

Moving Forward

AWF and other stakeholders, including the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), DRC's wildlife authority, met in July to determine the next steps for Iyondji.

One of the objectives moving forward will be to implement scientific surveying and monitoring protocols in order to accurately determine the population size of bonobo groups and other large mammals in Iyondji and the other protected areas while also assessing illegal human activities within the reserves.

According to Fowler, previous surveys have suggested a bonobo density of .35 bonobos per square kilometer, which extrapolates to an estimated population of 716 bonobos in the reserve. "However, the survey was done in an area of known bonobo activity and so it is probably over-estimating the population throughout the whole reserve," he cautions.

Data gathered on bonobos and other biodiversity trends in the area will be shared with conservation managers on the ground, enabling them to make informed decisions about where to deploy human and material resources when addressing conservation threats. The same data will also be shared with the Congolese government, helping it further develop and implement its National Bonobo Conservation Action Plan. All information on bonobos gathered at Lomako, Iyondji, and other sites will be communicated globally through the A.P.E.S. database maintained by the Max Planck Institute—a prominent research institute in Germany and an AWF technical partner—giving primatologists and conservationists around the world access to valuable information.

Economic Opportunities

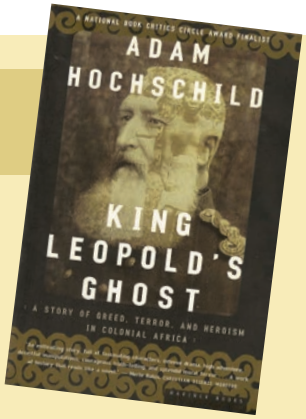
Meanwhile, AWF continues to conduct daily monitoring of bonobos, which is helping to habituate the normally skittish apes to the presence of humans—thus paving the way for future researchers and tourists to visit the sites. This, in turn, will help generate income and employment opportunities for nearby communities through scientific research and ecotourism. (AWF recently signed a contract with Jengi Tours, a private operator specializing in Central Africa, to develop a tourism model at AWF's Lomako Conservation Science Center.)

However, the grueling trek—by boat, motorbike, and on foot—to reach Iyondji and Lomako underscores just how difficult it will be for future researchers and tourists to visit these remote sites.

"Eco-tourism is definitely one aim, but we need to be realistic because it will require a lot of investment in infrastructure," says Fowler. "In the more medium-term future, it may be through scientific research that employment is generated and income gained." ■

FROM THE AWF LIBRARY

King Leopold's Ghost, by Adam Hochschild



It is perhaps of little surprise that today's Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is still rife with conflict, considering its ill-fated beginnings as the personal property of Belgium's King Leopold II. Under the guise of philanthropy, Belgium's scheming monarch enriched himself on trade in ivory, rubber, and minerals while the labor system he condoned claimed an estimated 10 million to 13 million lives. Thanks to a handful of Congo reformists, Leopold's brutal system was eventually exposed for what it really was: a private fiefdom.

See more books on Africa on page 8.

Making an Impact, One Cook Stove at a Time

AWF offers eco-friendly cook stoves in a town experiencing rapid development

By Madeline Johnson

Teddy Kinyanjui

AWF recently launched a *jiko*, or eco-stove, shop in the town of Kimana in Kenya. The jiko ovens, which only require charcoal made from tree branches, use charcoal more efficiently than other cook stoves.

In rural Kenya, 80 percent of the population relies on charcoal and firewood for cooking purposes. This has serious implications for the environment, as entire trees are felled and burned in kilns for hours to produce charcoal (and many trees are needed to produce a sufficient amount of the stuff). AWF believes, however, that by providing the population with energy alternatives, a dramatic positive impact can be made. And in the town of Kimana in AWF's Kilimanjaro Heartland, we are doing just that—one *jiko* at a time.

What is a "jiko," you ask? A jiko is a type of cooking stove designed to use charcoal more efficiently. Not only does this oven burn the charcoal more efficiently, but the charcoal for the jiko is made from just the branches and trimmings of trees.

Ecological & Economical

After an eight-month feasibility study determined that this area would be receptive to adopting more eco-friendly cooking options, AWF chose the town of Kimana for the project. "Kimana has developed rapidly since the paving of its main highway, which has increased pressure on the natural resources of the nearby Chulyu Hills and Amboseli National Parks," said Fiesta Warinwa, Heartland director for Kilimanjaro. "As the population grows, more wood will be needed for building materials, firewood, and charcoal. Change was essential."

AWF therefore funded the opening of Kimana's first-ever jiko shop early this year. On the opening day, the jiko shop sold four charcoal stoves and one firewood stove, and received orders for six additional stoves from businesses. (Kilns are available for order as well.) "It's fantastic, because restaurants and hotels use a massive amount of charcoal," explained Teddy Kinyanjui, a consultant working as project manager for AWF on the jiko shop.

According to Kinyanjui, using jiko stoves is not only preferable ecologically, but also economically, something that he emphasizes when talking to interested buyers. "The units will last more than five years with correct maintenance and care and generally pay for themselves in energy savings within one year," he noted. Two of the earliest purchasers of jikos, local restaurants, are already reaping economic benefits: Since their switch to jiko ovens, they have been able to purchase additional products with the money they saved on charcoal purchases.

In addition, Cookswell Jikos, the company supplying all the ovens for AWF's Kimana shop, has begun packaging its kilns with two free indigenous seedlings, giving people the option to be completely self-sufficient. "As with any energy source, if you can grow it and refine it yourself, it becomes remarkably cheaper and vastly more sustainable," Kinyanjui explained.

80 percent of the population relies on charcoal and firewood for cooking.

Publicizing the Jiko

Since its doors opened in May, AWF has begun to publicize the benefits of a jiko oven throughout the local villages through roadshows and market day demonstrations. "The mobile promotional platform is a common, established method of introducing new products in rural Kenya," Kinyanjui explained. Those who may be unable to get to the Kimana jiko store are still able to learn about and purchase the product. As with the United States, these events feature cooking demonstrations, with samples of items such as freshly baked buns available. On one occasion, Kinyanjui even enlisted the help of a local "celebrity" chef from a nearby luxury safari camp—who reportedly has been using such jiko ovens for more than four years—to do a product demonstration and endorsement.

Kinyanjui is optimistic about the future of this project. "By affording people the opportunity to implement sustainable, clean cooking solutions in their lives, a greater level of protection can be availed to our last remaining wild areas and forests in Africa—while also improving livelihoods," he said. ■

Wildlife Watch

Serval

By Madeline Johnson

When thinking about African cats, the mind often ventures to lions, leopards, and cheetahs. There is however, another cat that lives outside the spotlight: the serval. Given their nocturnal nature, servals can be hard to glimpse. Servals are most often found in the tall grasses of the savanna. While categorized as medium-sized cats, their long legs make them appear larger and their long, lean necks allow them to see above the savanna's tall grasses. They are characterized by their head size, which is disproportionately much smaller than their body mass. These unique physical features have earned the serval the nickname "giraffe cat."

Servals subsist mainly on rodents, but, as opportunistic predators, their diet can also include hares, hyraxes, fish, reptiles, and frogs. Their legs allow them to achieve a top speed of 50 mph and leap from a stationary position to 12 ft. horizontally, a skill that assists in catching birds. When hunting, servals will often pause for up to 15 minutes to listen for prey. With their large ears they can detect rodents burrowing below.

Servals lead solitary lives, only coming together to mate. Females give birth to litters of two to four kittens after a two-month gestational period. It is very rare to see serval kittens, as they are kept hidden by the mother in dense brush. At six months old, serval kittens are already hunting for themselves, and by 12 months, they are completely independent of their mother.

Serval population numbers have dwindled over the years due to human encroachment on their habitat and as a result of being hunted for their pelts. Additionally, natural predators such as leopards take their toll. The serval is still common, however, in much of sub-Saharan Africa and can even be found in North Africa, in countries like Morocco and Algeria. ■

Federico Veronesi/www.federicoveronesi.com

Nature's Best Photography grand prize winner (and AWF photographer partner) Federico Veronesi captured this shot of a young serval; see more winning images on p. 4.

Book Club Africa

A reading list for all seasons

By Kathleen Garrigan

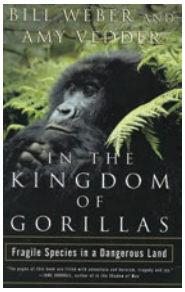
From novels and memoirs to field and natural history guides, the continent of Africa has birthed a wealth of literature. Here we recommend a few excellent books penned by both African and non-African writers.

FICTION

Things Fall Apart
by Chinua Achebe

Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe tells the fictional story of Okonkwo, a man whose village is slowly and irrevocably changed by the arrival of Christianity and colonialism. Like many Africans who witnessed the arrival of Europeans to their homelands in the late 19th century, Okonkwo perceives a new era dawning, one that has little room for the traditional beliefs and customs that have sustained him and his tribe for centuries.

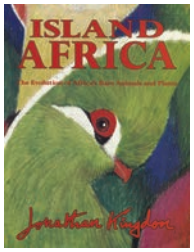
NON-FICTION: Species



In the Kingdom of Gorillas
by Amy Vedder and Bill Webber

In 1978, Amy Vedder and Bill Webber moved to Rwanda to study the critically endangered mountain gorillas under famed primatologist Dian Fossey. The authors recall their years studying the gorillas, their sometimes-difficult relationship with Fossey, and their efforts to teach Rwandans about local wildlife and conservation.

NON-FICTION: Ecosystems



Island Africa: The Evolution of Africa's Rare Animals and Plants
by Jonathan Kingdon

Tanzanian-born evolutionary biologist and author Jonathan Kingdon spotlights Africa's extraordinarily diverse ecosystems through the lenses of science and art. Descriptions of landscapes and the animals and plants that inhabit them are accompanied by Kingdon's own sketches and artistic depictions and demonstrate how uniquely adapted—and thus fragile—Africa's flora and fauna are. ■

For other recommendations from AWF's reading list, visit awf.org/library