

African Wildlife News

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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.

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Billy Dodson

Craig B. Shibley

In recent months, attempts to poach elephants have become increasingly brazen and high-tech.

The **KILLING** Fields

Africa's elephants are under assault, prompting AWF to expand its operations

By Kathleen Garrigan

Poisoned pumpkins. Poison-tipped spears. Gunmen on horseback. Gunmen in helicopters. Anti-tank mines.

These days if you're an elephant poacher, the weapons of choice are as diverse as they are profuse and are the instruments by which tens of thousands of the world's largest land mammal are disappearing from Africa's savannas and forests every year. Yet poaching alone doesn't explain the rapid disappearance of the continent's elephants. Something is driving the poaching.

That something is a voracious demand, mostly coming from Asia, for the pachyderm's teeth—its ivory.

Even now, as elephant carcasses litter the African savanna, half a world away, ivory craftsmen and women are busily spinning the "white gold" into jewelry, stamps, religious figurines, elaborate sculptures, and a seeming surfeit of other products sure to dazzle the ivory buyer, who sees not the poached elephant but simply a beautiful object. The demand for these objects is sky high—and growing.

However, while demand for ivory may be inexhaustible, the supply isn't. Currently, the number of elephants in Africa is somewhere between 400,000 and 600,000. "It's estimated

(continued on page 4)



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An Elephantine Intervention

The job description is easy to write:

“WANTED: CONSERVATION PROFESSIONAL FOR AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION. In addition to being passionate about Africa and its wildlife, must be:

- A people person, able to relate to people from all walks of life;
- A regional historian with an understanding of how past events have led to current circumstances;
- A scientist who can apply conservation research to the real world;
- A creative thinker able to find new solutions to long-standing problems;
- An optimist who finds the potential for success in even the most seemingly intractable situations; and
- A realist who understands when it might be time to apply different methods.

The faint of heart need not apply.”

Sometimes I think that last point may be the most critical, for we all know that conservation can be a challenging, and sometimes dispiriting, endeavor. You’ve hopefully had a chance to read our special supplement, “Rhinos in Peril,” which came with the previous issue of *African Wildlife News* (see an update on page 5). Unfortunately, it is not only rhino poaching but also elephant poaching that has been on the rise in Africa.

Demand for elephant ivory has increased in the past couple of years, in part because of rising incomes in Asia. As you’ll read in our cover story, there are many criminals that are only too happy to slaughter defenseless elephants to satisfy this demand. AWF has identified some new locations where we’ll direct additional funds, supplementing our ongoing work to support national parks and communities in our Heartlands.

It takes a special kind of person to have the commitment, conviction, and courage to tackle conservation in Africa.

To be successful, though, we also need to ensure that Africa has sufficient qualified conservation professionals. As you can probably

guess, that tongue-in-cheek job description of mine was easy to write but has historically been difficult to fill. AWF’s history began with support of the College of African Wildlife Management in Mweka, Tanzania. As Mweka College celebrates its 50th anniversary year (see p. 7), we are going back to our capacity-building roots and launching a new conservation mentoring program. Meet our first class of conservation management trainees on p. 6.

It takes a special kind of person to have the commitment, conviction, and courage to tackle conservation in Africa. But with your continued support, we’ll have a lasting impact—not just for Africa’s rhinos and elephants, but for the entire continent.



John Butler

Patrick Bergin, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

Where East Meets West

AWF expands its work in Uganda

By Kathleen Garrigan

Winston Churchill once called Uganda the “Pearl of Africa,” and indeed the country’s diversity of animals and landscapes has earned it the verbal adornment. Here the East African savanna meets Central Africa’s lush forests, transforming the Ugandan canvas into a rich, overlapping tapestry of ecosystems that are home to some of the world’s most celebrated species, from two of the world’s five great apes—the mountain gorilla and chimpanzee—to lions, elephants, buffalo, and other iconic African wildlife.

Situated on the East African plateau with its western border tucked into the Albertine Rift—the western half of East Africa’s great rift—Uganda boasts abundant rainfall, consistent climate, and extraordinary natural assets.

“The centerpiece for conserving Uganda’s biodiversity, and the basis for the tourism industry in the country, is the Albertine Rift Valley,” says Kaddu Sebunya, AWF’s director for the Tourism for Biodiversity Program, a new project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (or USAID). “This area of Africa contains 52 percent of all bird species and 39 percent of all mammal species found on the continent and has more endemic species of plants and animals than any other eco-region of Africa.”

For close to a decade, AWF has worked with communities, wildlife authorities, and the private sector in and around Uganda’s Bwindi Impenetrable National Park to protect the critically endangered mountain gorillas.



AWF has embarked on a new program to boost Uganda’s eco-tourism industry while creating a foundation for future conservation.

Philip Murungi

Now, in recognition of Uganda’s other natural assets, AWF is embarking on a countrywide program to enhance economic growth and biodiversity conservation through tourism. Uganda’s National Development Plan for 2010 – 2015 has recognized tourism as a facilitator of economic growth and development.

“In Uganda, rural poverty is rooted in a lack of economic opportunities and in the deterioration of natural resources essential to rural productive activities,” explains Sebunya. “Linking tourism to biodiversity conservation and the well-being of local communities, and understanding how and where they overlap, unlocks many opportunities in the country.” ■

Carnivores in the Backyard

AWF conducts cross-border carnivore census to inform conservation measures in Kilimanjaro Heartland

By Kathleen Garrigan

Carnivores across Africa are in decline as a result of habitat loss and fragmentation, as well as human–wildlife conflict. In AWF’s Kilimanjaro Heartland, which overlaps the Kenya–Tanzania border, lions, wild dogs, and other carnivores are estimated to have declined by 70 percent in the last century. Last year, to gain a better understanding of population trends and distribution, AWF assisted Kenya Wildlife Service and Tanzania National Parks in conducting the region’s first cross-border large-carnivore census. Preliminary results indicate hyenas are the most abundant carnivore in the ecosystem, followed by jackals and lions, and pose the greatest threat to livestock. Lions were a close second. Information provided by the census will lead to fresh approaches for mitigating human–predator conflict, supplementing AWF’s ongoing work with communities to protect wildlife. ■

Contrary to popular beliefs, hyenas—not lions—on the Kenya–Tanzania border are likely the greatest threat to livestock.



Alejandro Tawil

The Killing Fields *(Cont'd from cover)*

that we've lost tens of thousands of elephants in the last couple of years," explains Philip Muruthi, senior director of conservation science at AWF. "If we have at most 600,000 total elephants on the continent and are losing tens of thousands, the picture doesn't look good over the next 15 or 20 years if you do the math."

Indeed, at the rate elephants are being poached, the supply will dry up long before demand does. Which is why AWF is taking steps in our current Heartlands and in new landscapes to give elephants the best measure of protection.

New blood diamonds

Like the "conflict diamonds" that fueled civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Angola during the latter decades of the 20th century, ivory has become the new blood diamond. More valuable than gold, it is being used to buy arms in many conflict-ridden countries.

Last spring, suspected Janjaweed—gunmen on horseback—from Chad crossed the Cameroonian border and slaughtered between 300 and 400 elephants in Cameroon's Bouba N'Djida National Park (see "Carnage in Cameroon," *African Wildlife News*, Summer 2012). In Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 22 elephants were found dead with precision gunshot wounds to their heads. Members of Uganda's military were implicated and suspected of using a helicopter to kill elephants and ferry away the ivory. (Not long after the incident, a large shipment of ivory, equating to 22 elephants, was seized at a Ugandan

airport.) In Somalia, Al Shabab militants are suspected of funding their terrorist operations with ivory from elephants poached in Kenya.

The elephants that are most vulnerable are those in countries with weak law enforcement and porous borders. That's precisely where groups like AWF are helping.

Reinforcing parks and protection

In retrospect, the elephants of Bouba N'Djida were sitting ducks. The park, located on the border with Chad—a country plagued by poverty, violence, and corruption—is managed and protected by fewer than 10 rangers, all stationed together miles away from the border.

Too many parks in Africa are underfunded and their rangers, underequipped and untrained, leaving protected areas at the mercy of both subsistence and commercial poaching. Furthermore, communities living alongside parks that might have served as additional buffers of protection have often been left to fend for themselves, and historically have been considered obstacles rather than partners when it comes to protecting wildlife. AWF has worked to change that dynamic, helping local villages develop enterprises and realize economic benefits from the wildlife in their backyards. In return, communities and wildlife authorities are finally cooperating for the first time. Last April, community scouts in the Sekute Conservation Area in Zambia alerted the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) of poachers in their midst, gathering information on the poachers' activities and helping ZAWA to recover 41 pieces of ivory.

Jones Masonde, AWF's ecologist in the Kazungula Heartland, which includes the Sekute Conservation Area, says the arrest of the poachers shows that the Sekute community is starting to value their wildlife. "Poachers that have traditionally used this area as a transit point for contraband like ivory and rhino horn are learning that the communities are now cooperating with the wildlife authorities and taking ownership of their resources," he says.

Similarly in Kenya, scouts from communities around Amboseli National Park, home to 1,500 elephants, are cooperating with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in apprehending armed poachers. Scouts working in the wildlife corridor between Amboseli and Chyulu Hills National Park, for example, tell tales of going "undercover" in their traditional Maasai garb to gather information from community members on planned elephant poachings, then participating in stakeouts of these poachers with KWS. During full moons, others have camped out overnight near known elephant watering holes to guard against poachers. Because they now have an economic stake in wildlife, these communities are making it more difficult for poachers to gain access to elephants and other wildlife in the parks.

First line of defense

In many ways, communities are the first line of defense, followed by the park authority. AWF continues to work with park officials to enhance management and protection inside protected areas, everything from providing an effective park management plan to training, equipment, and salaries for rangers. This is exactly the kind of strength-training that vulnerable parks in countries like Cameroon desperately need and that may have helped prevent last spring's carnage. In addition to providing about US\$25,000 for ranger support in northern Cameroon, AWF has identified two other locations in East and Southern Africa hit hard by poaching, where it intends to provide emergency support.



Jones Masonde

Communities can be critical players in preventing poaching, such as in Zambia where scouts supported by AWF helped wildlife authorities capture elephant poachers last year.





Billy Dodson

If poaching continues at current rates, the future does not look good for Africa's elephants.

Communities and wildlife authorities are only part of the equation when it comes to combatting poaching on the ground, however. Ultimately, the cooperation from both in apprehending poachers must be backed up by a judicial process that appropriately penalizes wildlife criminals. Recent—and rare—elephant poachings outside of Manyara Ranch in northern Tanzania underscore this. After a number of elephants were poached, communities around

Like the “conflict diamonds” that fueled civil wars, ivory has become the new blood diamond.

the ranch helped AWF and authorities to identify the culprits. However, the poachers were released immediately on bail and, according to AWF's Maasai Steppe Heartland director, poaching penalties remain insubstantial in the district. Now that AWF is getting the cooperation from communities, ensuring penalties and sentences handed down by the courts are steep enough to dissuade existing and future poachers is an area in which AWF will turn its attention.

Such measures may have come too late for Bouba N'Djida's elephants last year—but AWF is ensuring it won't be too late for the rest of Cameroon's, and Africa's, elephants. ■

Rhino Poaching at All-Time High—Again

Year-end rhino poaching numbers are cause for alarm

A total of 668 rhinos were poached in 2012 in South Africa, the African country with the largest rhino population. This is a horrific increase over 2011's total, which at the time was a new high of 448. AWF continues to monitor the situation and make strategic investments to ensure the long-term survival of Africa's rhinos. Support our effort at: awf.org/donate



Federico Veronesi/www.federicoveronesi.com



George Okwaro, a member of AWF's first class of the Conservation Management Training Program, is applying his forestry experience in AWF's Heartlands.



Sam Lloyd says he is eager to explore AWF's projects while a conservation management trainee.



Theo Way Nana has a background in law and previously worked in AWF's Congo Heartland.

Welcome, Class of Conservationists

The first class of conservation management trainees begins its 24-month journey with AWF

By Gayane Margaryan

Conservation is not a first-choice career path for most Africans. Finding individuals with the right training, skills, commitment, and experience to drive AWF's conservation work remains a great challenge," says Daudi Sumba AWF's vice president for program operations.

To address this issue and further its tradition of conservation leadership development, AWF launched the Conservation Management Training Program (CMTTP). The program gives master's degree graduates the opportunity to be trained and mentored by AWF's conservation leaders over 24 months.

Of the more than 100 applicants, Sam Lloyd, George Okwaro, and Theo Way Nana possessed the conservation experience and passion necessary to pioneer the program.

As a child growing up in England and France, Lloyd was fascinated by nature. After earning a degree in biology and a

the International Forestry Resources and Institutions Project at the Kenya Forestry Research Institute.

Nana is not just the sole French speaker of the trio but also the only lawyer. Possessing a master's degree in international and comparative environmental law, he first came to AWF in 2009, working as a program officer in our Congo Heartland. Nana says this experience helped "to strengthen my desire to engage in a career in this sector." He notes the CMTTP will allow him to build expertise in African conservation through AWF's uniquely pragmatic approach.

What lies ahead

After learning about AWF processes and infrastructure, the trainees are now in the second stage of the program: hands-on fieldwork. Lloyd is working in the Kazungula Heartland, supporting ecological and community development. Okwaro is assisting with climate change and forestry work in Kenya's Mau Forest,

"I doubt chances to explore, learn, and grow like this come twice in a lifetime."

—Sam Lloyd, AWF conservation management trainee

master's in conservation science, he worked at Frontier, the Society for Environmental Exploration. According to Lloyd, the opportunity to work with AWF led him to apply for the CMTTP. "During this time when jobs are rare, it's an incredible opportunity to have an organization invest so heavily in you," he says.

Okwaro, who calls rural western Kenya home, says his love for conservation began "when I was 8 years old, helping my uncle plant trees." Okwaro later studied forestry at university and most recently worked as a research assistant for

as well as in the Chyulu and Kolo Forests in Kenya and Tanzania, respectively. Nana is stationed in the Samburu Heartland, helping to implement the participatory forest-management plans, land-use proposals, and livestock toolkit.

The final three months of the program will be spent reflecting on their time in the program and setting forth recommendations based on their experiences. "I'm hoping to explore as many of AWF's projects as possible while I'm here," Lloyd said. "I doubt chances to explore, learn, and grow like this come twice in a lifetime." ■



Follow the trainees on their CMTTP journey through their blogs: awf.org/cmttblog

Mweka Milestone Marks Triumph for Conservation

50 years after AWF helped fund its establishment, Mweka College continues to impact African conservation

At the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania lies the College of African Wildlife Management, commonly referred to as Mweka College. Founded in 1963, a time when there were few trained wildlife managers in Africa, the conservation management school was AWF's (then known as the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation) first significant funding project. The college has since grown from 25 students to 500 and offers 10 programs in wildlife management and tourism, significantly multiplying the impact of AWF's initial capacity-building efforts.

As Mweka celebrates its 50th anniversary, AWF talked with acting rector Freddy Manongi—himself a Mweka graduate—about the school's conservation accomplishments and impact in Africa.

Q: Why was the establishment of Mweka College so important?

Mweka has trained more than 5,000 wildlife managers from 52 countries worldwide. It is a pioneer in the field of wildlife management in Africa. The nature and type of wildlife management in Africa has largely been influenced by the training offered by Mweka.

Q: How does Mweka compare with other conservation management programs in Africa?

The college's strategic location gives the school a competitive edge over similar institutions. Situated near a number of renowned protected areas, including the Serengeti, Mkomazi, and Tarangire National Parks, Mweka enables students to acquire invaluable practical field experience in a variety of different ecosystems, from savannas to tropical forests to miombo woodlands.

Q: What impact has AWF had on the school?

The partnership between Mweka and AWF started when it donated



AWF's first funding project was to help launch the College of African Wildlife Management in Mweka, Tanzania, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

US\$41,000 for the establishment of the college. AWF has provided scholarships and annual student prizes for Mweka's best students. It has commissioned the college to prepare land management plans and community-based conservation programs for a number of AWF's projects in northern Tanzania (in AWF's Kilimanjaro and Maasai Steppe Heartlands). Most recently, AWF funded the development of an HIV/AIDS workplace policy and strategic plan for Mweka, which helps prevent the loss of human capacity in the conservation sector.

Q: What are some of Mweka's greatest accomplishments to date?

Mweka has maintained a stringent academic program that has been recognized both domestically and internationally. Mweka received the United Nations Environment Programme's Sasakawa Environment Prize in 1986, recognizing our proven record of environmental achievement. Mweka also received a Center of Excellence status from the East African Community. No other college in Africa has demonstrated these achievements.

Q: In what areas of conservation management have your students gone on to work?

Mweka graduates are found in virtually all protected wildlife areas in sub-Saharan Africa. Major tour companies in East Africa recruit Mweka graduates for their conservation skills. Other graduates occupy top senior positions in wildlife institutions across the continent, including Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, and Botswana.

Q: What priorities do you have for the school?

The top priority is to assess the achievements and trends in wildlife management and wildlife tourism training in Africa and redefine the college's vision and mission based on the changing wildlife management scenarios in Africa. Fostering and promoting collaboration amongst key stakeholders of wildlife management training in Africa is also at the top of our agenda. ■

Wildlife Watch

The African Hornbill

By Madeline Johnson

When it comes to African wildlife, the larger mammals—such as lions, rhinos, gorillas, and elephants—tend to steal the show. With their undeniable size, sheer strength, and stately presence on the continent, it's clear why. But Africa is also home to one of the largest and most diverse population of birds in the world. About 2,500 different species of birds pepper Africa's wild lands, with 72 percent of them endemic to the continent.

A group of the most striking and conspicuous birds in Africa is the hornbill. Ranging greatly in size, one hornbill species can grow to be as large as 1 m high, with a diet that varies from fruit to insects. Hornbills will pair for life and when ready to reproduce, create distinctive hole-like nests. After laying eggs, females will seal themselves into this nesting cavity, leaving only a small gap for food. It then becomes

the male's job to find and deliver the food supply to the female while she is entombed. It is thought that this behavior keeps the female and the nesting site safe from other hornbills.

The hornbill has traditionally played a role in cultural folklore and ceremonies across the African continent. The Southern Ground Hornbill, for example, displays prominently as a wise figure in Zimbabwean culture. It would never do to speak poorly of the hornbill for fear of retribution.

The hornbill is only one of many fascinating species of birds in Africa that play an integral role in ecosystems throughout the African continent. Although most bird species do not face direct poaching threats as do rhinos and elephants, many are in danger of loss of habitat due to deforestation and agriculture. ■



Billy Dodson

The red-billed hornbill is one of many hornbill species.



To learn about some of the other unique birds found in Africa, visit our new Facebook photo album at awf.org/awnbirds



Billy Dodson

A Firsthand View

Safari Sweepstakes winner takes in the sights of the Serengeti

As the lucky winner of last fall's AWF Safari Sweepstakes, Leslie Wainger and her sister are now on a once-in-a-lifetime African safari adventure, courtesy of AWF. As part of the exclusive AWF Serengeti Migration Safari, Wainger may, at this very moment, be sitting in a vehicle in the middle of the Serengeti plains, surrounded by wildebeest and zebra. Our winner will also be exploring Tanzania's famed Ngorongoro Crater; Tarangire National Park, where AWF conducts lion research; and Manyara Ranch Conservancy, one of AWF's flagship enterprise projects. That's one of the benefits of AWF's exclusive safaris—you get to see firsthand the wildlife, landscapes, and communities that your donations are helping to conserve and support.

Check back in the pages of *African Wildlife News* and on awf.org for a firsthand account of Wainger's trip. And, stay tuned for another safari sweepstakes announcement later this year! ■

The winner of AWF's Safari Sweepstakes is currently experiencing the spectacle of zebra and wildebeest migrations at the height of foaling season.