

# African Wildlife Foundation's AFRICAN LANDSCAPE

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African governments appear to be taking leadership on overturning the wildlife trafficking crisis plaguing Africa's elephants and other wildlife.

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## Hope Ahead in Fight Against Wildlife Trafficking?

By Philip Muruthi *Vice president, species protection*

Africa is in a crisis that few would have anticipated, at least not the extent to which it is impacting the most visible symbols of conservation, the continent's iconic species. Not only are current levels of illegal off-take unsustainable, but the species affected are also in much-reduced populations and ranges. Protecting remaining wildlife populations is thus a priority. (Later, we must recover lost population is and rehabilitate ranges.)

In these renewed efforts, African governments and citizens must lead, supported by the international community—not the reverse.

Fortunately, there have been increased efforts to this effect. Signaling increased political support, several high-level meetings have been held in the past two years. In March 2015, a meeting of 32 countries and NGOs took place in Kasane, Botswana. In addition to being hosted by President Ian Khama, the conference attracted a high level of political leadership, including the participation of the president of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba, and the vice presidents of Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia. The two largest consumer countries of illicit ivory and rhino horn, China and Vietnam, also participated and pledged their support to fight the trade.

During the meeting, participants reviewed progress on the 2014 London Conference Declaration and developed the Kasane Statement, which contains meaningful new commitments to action that can help tackle illegal wildlife trade. It addresses demand reduction, money laundering linked to the illegal wildlife trade, tougher law enforcement and community involvement in the protection of wildlife resources.

AWF has contributed to both regional and continental strategies to combat wildlife trafficking. In November 2014, AWF co-sponsored the International Conservation Caucus Foundation's (ICCF's) Regional Summit to Stop Wildlife Crime and Advance Wildlife Conservation in Arusha, Tanzania. At this gathering, member countries of the East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) signed the Arusha Declaration, a comprehensive list of activities to strengthen transboundary collaboration on combatting wildlife crime and advancing conservation.

AWF was also active at the International Conference on Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wildlife Products and > continued on page 6



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## Optimism, Even in Trying Times

**W**ildlife trafficking continues to take center stage in many conservation conversations, and for good reason. In March, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) confirmed that the 2014 elephant poaching rates registered through its Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme remained virtually unchanged from 2013, at 20,000 elephants per year.

While that figure is an improvement over the numbers tracked by MIKE for 2012 (22,000 elephants killed) and 2011 (25,000), overall poaching rates are still exceeding natural birth rates. If these

stakeholders in this effort. Our cover story outlines some of the efforts we have already begun implementing with partners, including increased protections for high-value wildlife populations, law enforcement workshops and more.

### Support for SDGs

AWF is also addressing additional factors that hamper conservation. The recently approved Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include several development target areas that, if not achieved, will negatively impact Africa's natural resources.

Thus AWF is working in Zambia (page 10) and southern Tanzania (page 11) to ensure that agricultural conversion of land



“AWF is also addressing additional factors that hamper conservation”

levels remain unchanged in coming years, elephant populations will continue to decline on the African continent.

Nevertheless, we at the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) retain a sense of hope. This is because, increasingly, the conservation community is seeing African governments take leadership on this issue.

The April 2015 Conference on Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa in Brazzaville, for example, resulted in the first pan-African strategy to combat illicit trade in flora and fauna. As Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, commissioner of the African Union, said, “This conference is Africa-driven. ... With strong political will, regional cooperation and sustainable partnerships, the continent will be in a position to unite and act before it is too late.”

AWF stands ready to assist and support our partner governments and other

does not negatively impact critical wildlife habitat. We have worked with pastoral communities to halt land degradation (see opposite) and leveraged education to protect parts of the Congo Basin (page 9).

Combined, these efforts will ensure a prosperous future for Africa's wildlife, wild lands and, of course, its people. As with the battle against wildlife trafficking, more parties are beginning to understand the need to join forces and do more.

With that being the case, it is not difficult at all to feel a guarded sense of hope and optimism, even during these trying times.

*Daudi Sumba*

Daudi Sumba  
Vice president for programme design  
and government relations

## 2 Approaches to Working With Pastoralists

Pastoral traditions dominate both the Kilimanjaro and Samburu landscapes in Kenya, but AWF has applied different interventions to address conservation challenges in each region. Two recent projects highlight the possible approaches to working with pastoral communities on conservation issues.

In Samburu, some pastoral communities live up to 80 km from the nearest urban center. They have minimal to no access to financial services and thus no way to save or obtain loans. Locals are heavily dependent on their livestock—which negatively affects habitat through overstocking and overgrazing, while also providing no financial or food security for communities in times of drought.

AWF several years ago worked with the communities here to establish a financial services organisation, Nasaruni, and grow it into a savings and credit cooperative (SACCO). In May, AWF attended the official opening of a new banking hall for Nasaruni, ensuring a long-term future for an operation that now boasts more than 1,100 members. The SACCO regularly disburses upwards of 500,000 KES in loans per month; members save more than 100,000 KES each month.

### Better returns on cattle

In southern Kenya, AWF has implemented grazing zonation with communities, and supported the establishment of 37 livestock marketing groups to help communities realise better returns on their cattle. In February, an AWF-supported livestock market opened in Imbirikani, allowing the 1,100-plus members of the livestock marketing groups to have a central marketplace from which to sell and buy livestock. Communities here are now able to better manage their livestock and sell them at a higher cost, allowing them to limit the size of their herds and limit their involvement in unsustainable uses of natural resources. Frequent drought had driven some pastoralists to engage in agriculture but many are now turning back to livestock keeping. Women, too, are now involved in livestock ventures.

Pastoralism is the only conservation-friendly and sustainable form of land use in semi-arid environments. As such, AWF continues to find new ways of working with pastoral communities, in Kenya and elsewhere on the continent. ■

## IN BRIEF

- > AWF opened the Bili office in March 2015 and, with the *Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature* (ICCN), has selected, trained and equipped 25 scouts.
- > AWF supported an emergency meeting in Mana Pools National Park with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and stakeholders to develop an action plan on poaching.
- > AWF led a team of conservationists on a 5-day trek through Cameroon's Dja Faunal Reserve. The findings from the walk have given AWF greater insight into how best we can support the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) to manage this World Heritage Site.
- > The newest class of AWF's Conservation Leadership & Management Programme (formerly the Conservation Management Training Programme) has three associates, from Uganda, Ethiopia and China.
- > In partnership with footwear company Oliberté, AWF provided 80 pairs of customized boots to scouts in Ethiopia's Simien Mountains National Park. AWF also supplied new Gore-Tex outdoor gear, along with hats and gloves.
- > Through the USAID/Uganda Biodiversity Programme, AWF created a new 50-km monitoring trail, along with bathrooms and resting sheds, in Uganda's Budongo Forest Reserve.
- > A participatory forest management plan was developed and signed in the Ketumbeine and Gelai Forest Reserves in southern Kenya, which act as a water catchment for the flamingo breeding site of Lake Natron.
- > Jef Dupain, head of AWF's African Apes Initiative, led discussions around bushmeat hunting regulations at the Congo Basin Forest Partnership meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in June. Watch the video at: <http://bit.ly/CBFPvideo>
- > AWF's African Conservation Schools programme broke ground on renovations at Lupani School in Zambia and Manyara Ranch School in Tanzania.



AWF's approach for working with pastoral communities has differed based on specific community needs.



# TEMBO NAO NI RAIHA WA TANZANIA.

- BISHOP VALENTINO MOKIWA

UJANGILI UNATUUMIZA SOTE

AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION WILDAID MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM - TANZANIA

## AWF Urges Tanzanians to Protect Their Wildlife

In 2012, AWF launched a public awareness campaign in Asia to help reduce demand for illegal wildlife products such as elephant ivory and rhino horn. The campaign has been successful in raising awareness in Asia of Africa's wildlife poaching and trafficking crisis (see "Surveys in Asia Show Public Support for Ivory Ban," right). In June 2015, AWF, alongside its partner in the Asia campaign, WildAid, launched a similar effort in Africa—specifically, Tanzania.

The Tanzanian Wildlife Pride Campaign features national celebrities and cultural icons, who will convey to the general public the severity of the poaching crisis through Swahili-

language radio and television, social media, newspapers and magazines, billboards and videos. Bearing a tagline of "*Ujangili Unatumiza sote* (Poaching steals from us all)," the campaign seeks to mobilise Tanzanians to advocate for greater protection of their elephants and other species, and protect them from the illegal wildlife trade.

"Tanzania has always been known for its large elephant herds and, together with Botswana and Zimbabwe, is home to half of all of Africa's elephants," said AWF CEO Patrick Bergin, who attended the official campaign launch ceremony in June, alongside Tanzania's Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Hon. Lazaro Nyalandu; WildAid Executive Director Peter Knights; and two of the campaign's new celebrity ambassadors, musical entertainer Alikiba and former Miss Tanzania, Jacqueline Mengi. "The current rate of poaching, however, threatens to erode that distinction. As Tanzanians learn more about the crisis through the campaign, we hope they will work with us to protect this tremendous asset."

A survey conducted by AWF and WildAid found that Tanzanians take great pride in their elephants. Of the 2,000 citizens surveyed in both rural and urban areas, more than 73 per cent said that they associated wildlife with their national identity and heritage. Nevertheless, a 2014 countrywide elephant census found that the nation had lost about 60 per cent of its elephant population in the past five years—a dramatic and unsustainable decline.

"Elephants are at the top of the wish list for most tourists who come to this country, and tourism generates over 12 per cent of our gross domestic product. Our elephants are a great asset to this country in many ways, and my government is determined to stop the slaughter. But we cannot do it alone. We want to enlist the help of all of our citizens in our efforts to stop the theft of our national heritage," said Minister Nyalandu. ■

To view a public service announcement from the campaign, visit [awf.org/alikiba](http://awf.org/alikiba)

“More than 73 per cent associate wildlife with their national identity”

A new Africa-based public awareness campaign by AWF and WildAid is leveraging the influence of religious leaders (top) and celebrities such as Tanzanian musical entertainer Alikiba (at left) to urge citizens to raise their voices against the poaching of Africa's elephants.



## Surveys in Asia Show Support for Ivory Ban

**A**WF's ongoing public awareness campaign to educate Asian audiences on the consequences of their ivory and rhino demand is having positive results. In December, nearly 1,000 residents in Beijing, Shanghai and Gaungzhou, China, were surveyed on their attitudes toward ivory, and another 900-plus were asked about rhino horn. Compared to similar surveys conducted in 2012:

- There was a **51.5 per cent increase** in those who believed that elephant poaching is a problem. In 2014, just more than 70 per cent of respondents said elephant poaching is an issue, compared to 46.6 per cent in 2012.
- The 2014 ivory survey found a **44.8 per cent increase** in those who believed that elephants were poached for their tusks. Residents believing tusks are obtained only from natural elephant mortality fell from 33.8 per cent in 2012 to just 10.5 per cent in 2014.
- In 2014, **95 per cent** of residents agreed that the Chinese government should impose a ban on the ivory trade to help stop the poaching of elephants in Africa.

The survey on rhino horn also found encouraging signs, with fewer than half of all respondents now believing that rhino horn has medicinal effects, compared to 58.2 per cent in 2012. Further, 50 per cent of respondents now believe that horns come from poached rhinos—a 51.5 per cent increase in awareness since 2012.

And, in both the cases of ivory and rhino horn, 90 per cent of the respondents who had seen the public service announcements from AWF's campaign—which is being conducted with partners WildAid, Save The Elephants and others in China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Thailand—said they would no longer buy ivory or rhino horn.

“The fight to save Africa's elephants and rhinos continues to rage on the ground, but these results suggest that efforts to tackle the trade in both supply and demand countries are working,” said AWF CEO Patrick Bergin. ■



Recent surveys show that the Chinese public overwhelmingly supports a ban on the sale of ivory. Ivory shops can be readily found on the streets of China and Hong Kong (pictured).

Craig R. Sholley

## Campaign continues with release of Lang Lang PSA

**D**espite progress on changing Chinese attitudes toward ivory and rhino horn consumption, continued demand-reduction efforts are required in Asia. In June 2015, AWF, together with partners WildAid and Save The Elephants, released a new public service announcement (PSA) starring world-famous classical pianist Lang Lang. The

new PSA, which features Lang's performance of Beethoven's *Appassionata* sonata, will be distributed via Chinese media outlets.

In June, Lang also appeared with Beijing Capital International Airport officials, who launched an awareness campaign urging citizens travelling abroad not to bring ivory

back into China. At the event, customs officials announced that they had confiscated more than 1 ton of ivory products in 258 smuggling cases over the past year. Most of the seized ivory had been smuggled in from African nations including Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola and South Africa.

View Lang Lang's PSA at: [awf.org/lang-lang](http://awf.org/lang-lang)

> continued from page 1

Wild Flora of Africa in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 27 – 30 April 2015.

### Increased investment

With priorities having been outlined, now is the time for action, albeit with some domestication in countries and sites. Botswana's president announced that his government has a zero-tolerance policy toward wildlife crime, and he would not entertain corruption in the matter. Though Botswana has wildlife rangers, the country's defence forces are also involved in wildlife protection. Kenya has formed a multi-agency force to curb poaching, passed a strong wildlife law and increased funding and ranger numbers. Tanzania, which has lost much of its elephant population of the last 30 years, now has an approved wildlife protection strategy.

Finally, several countries, among them Kenya, the United States and China, have destroyed ivory this year to create awareness and send a clear message against illegal trade. These are encouraging examples, but much more needs to be done. AWF, for its part, has increased on-site investment to protect

species. Thus far, more than 32 priority populations of elephants, rhinoceroses, large carnivores and great apes have received support under our US\$10 million Urgent Response Fund. By 2018 we aim to support at least 40 key populations from poaching and more than 10 ports under the antitrafficking portion of the Fund.

AWF's approach to protecting species is multidisciplinary, incorporating traditional approaches such as training and equipping rangers but also adding modern technologies and approaches to strategically address an ever-evolving threat. In the Ruaha and Selous landscapes in central and southern Tanzania, AWF is working with partners Wildlife Conservation Society and Protected Area Management Support (PAMS) Foundation, respectively, to support on-the-ground and aerial patrols, provide equipment and monitor elephant populations within and outside of protected areas.

At Manyara Ranch Conservancy, AWF is working with Honeyguide Foundation to test what optimal levels of investment in rangers, tracker dogs and technology works best in what eventu-

ally will be a center of excellence for antipoaching in African savannas.

In Kafue, Zambia, we support Game Rangers International and the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) to undertake intelligence-led patrols in protecting the local elephant population.

Overall, I am optimistic about our chances of shoring up the populations of Africa's iconic species. Several of the populations we support are either growing or stable, including:

- The rhino populations at Great Fish River, Sabi Sand and Hluhluwe-Imfolozi in South Africa; Ol Pejeta Ranch and Tsavo West/Ngulia Sanctuary in Kenya; and the Kunene region in Namibia; and
- Elephants in Zambia's Kafue and Kazungula landscapes.

### Matter of time

AWF is investing in antitrafficking efforts by helping governments to deploy detection dog teams in key ports and by training judges and prosecutors—enhancing detection rates and successful commensurate sentencing of wildlife crime.

## YEAR OF Progress

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

### Good News



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

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

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

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

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

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

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

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



### Bad News

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



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

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



To start, AWF is establishing a center of excellence for training detection dogs and their handlers near Arusha, Tanzania. The first team of 13 handlers and eight canines graduated from our training facility in July, and immediately were deployed to two of Africa's most notorious ports, Mombasa and Dar es Salaam.

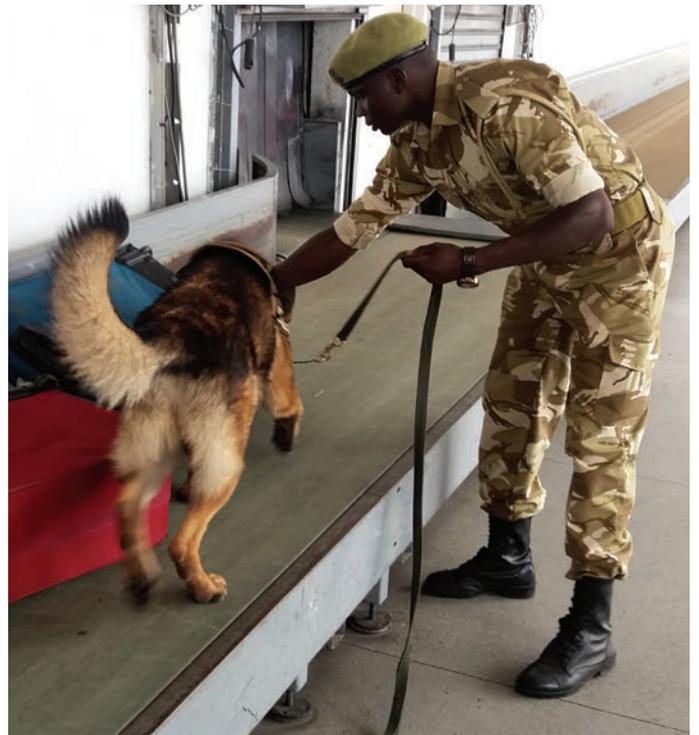
The training of judges and prosecutors is taking place through a series of workshops, starting with Kilimanjaro and Samburu landscapes; Mombasa and Nairobi, Kenya; and Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Topics covered in these trainings include wildlife and its value, legislations, enforcement best practices, prosecutor-guided wildlife crime investigations, chain of custody, multi-agency dialogue and collaborations. AWF recently hired a manager of wildlife law enforcement who will liaise with the various agencies as we expand our support to other countries.

AWF is also running awareness campaigns in key consumer countries in Asia—as well as in Africa. The Asia campaign, now going on more than three years, has successfully raised

awareness of Asian consumers about the tragic consequences of their demand for ivory, rhino horn and other wildlife products (see “Surveys in Asia Show Public Support for Ivory Ban” on page 5). According to a survey conducted in China in 2014, 95 per cent of respondents believe the Chinese government should impose a ban on the ivory trade.

The Chinese government in February appears to have taken a few steps in that direction, first with a limited ban in ivory imports in February and with an announcement in May that appears to imply its domestic ivory trade may eventually be closed. With concerted efforts, it is a matter of time before we avert the poaching crisis and

restore wildlife populations. AWF's goal: to conserve viable and functional populations of Africa's wildlife species embedded in their natural landscapes. ■



Detection canines trained under AWF's Conservation Canine Programme started work in September at Moi International Airport in Mombasa, Kenya.



- 14: Mozambique seizes 1.3 tonnes of elephant ivory and rhino horn in the city of Matola.
- 19: Singapore seizes US\$6 million of illegal ivory, its biggest ivory seizure in a decade.

MAY



- 5: Kenyan tycoon Abdurahman Mohammed Sheikh arrested in connection to Singapore seizure.
- 7: Illegal shipment of nearly 1 ton of ivory bound for Singapore seized in Uganda.
- 19: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service crushes 1 ton of ivory in New York's Times Square.
- 27: Census reveals Uganda's elephant population has risen 600% in 5 years.
- 29: China crushes ivory and makes announcement that appears to promise a phasing out of its legal domestic ivory trade.

JUNE

- 26: Census shows Mozambique has lost ~10,000 elephants in 5 years.
- 28: Wildlife contraband seized by Mozambican authorities is stolen from police custody.



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

## Decades of Work Paying off in Tanzania

By **Andrea Athanas** *Programme design manager, agriculture and energy*

Since supporting the establishment of the College of African Wildlife Management (Mweka) on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro in 1963, AWF has continued to work with the government of Tanzania and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement conservation efforts in northern Tanzania. Together, we have delivered a legacy of conservation and development impact in the Maasai Steppe and Kilimanjaro landscapes. The successful completion of the Scaling Up Conservation and Livelihood Efforts in northern Tanzania (SCALE) project presents an opportunity to reflect on our achievements in the landscape.

AWF pioneered its signature landscape approach to conservation in the Maasai Steppe, starting with investments in the core areas of Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks and expanding into surrounding community lands to enable wildlife movement through a large swathe of the system. The park infrastructure of entry gates, visitor centers and road networks services millions of tourists each year, generating millions of dollars of revenue for Tanzania.

But the wildlife of Tarangire and Lake Manyara depend on resources outside the park for survival. Wildebeest and

zebra migrate to the short-grass plains of Lake Natron and Enduimet during the wet season. These migrations routes are mostly on community lands. The parks are dependent on surrounding Maasai communities allowing wildlife to graze alongside their livestock.

### 5 WMAs established

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are a way for villagers to benefit from living with wildlife. AWF has established five WMAs covering 11,531 km<sup>2</sup> of critically important habitat. Burunge, Enduimet, Makame, Randilen and Lake Natron WMAs were selected because of their strategic importance for wildlife and their ecological values, ensuring the integrity and resilience of the Tarangire–Manyara–Natron–Kilimanjaro ecosystem.

So in addition to generating revenue for villages from wildlife-based tourism, WMAs address key threats to wildlife: habitat loss and poaching. The conversion of open grazing land to agricultural production and settlement severs the landscape and increases conflicts between humans and wildlife. Land-use plans are the bedrock of the WMA process, providing a means for communities to negotiate and agree how land will be managed and zoned

in areas critical for wildlife movement. Analysis reveals that the rate of conversion of land in the WMAs—4 per cent in Burunge, for example—is significantly lower than outside—22 per cent—meaning elephant, lion, wildebeest and giraffe are able to move more freely between core zones of protection.

The poaching scourge is sadly another significant threat to wildlife in northern Tanzania. But poaching levels go down when there are scouts on the ground. The 98 village game scouts in the WMAs risk their lives on a daily basis to protect wildlife moving through community lands. And evidence indicates it is working. While the overall elephant population in Tanzania declined by 60 per cent between 2009 and 2014, the populations in the north have increased. The elephant population in the Tarangire–Manyara ecosystem increased by 64 per cent, in fact.

Decades of work are paying off in northern Tanzania, but more is needed to move the WMAs to a point of financial sustainability and enable the fledgling governance structures of community-based wildlife management to mature. ■

*Wildlife management areas have successfully protected wildlife and habitat in northern Tanzania.*





## Ilima Conservation Primary School Inaugurated

Billy Dodson

By **Brian McBrearity** *Managing director, African Conservation Schools*

**T**his March, AWF joined representatives from the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment to celebrate the official opening of the Ilima Conservation Primary School. Located in the Maringa–Lopori–Wamba (MLW) landscape, the Ilima School is the first site fully designed, constructed and supported under AWF's African Conservation Schools (ACS) programme.

While it was an exciting day for AWF and its partners, it was even more momentous for the students, teachers and the entire Ilima community.

The educational systems in many African countries are stretched, and ministries of education often face an endless list of needs and limited budget to address those needs. Rural school systems are also typically less of a priority than their urban counterparts. This is precisely the opportunity for AWF and our ACS programme to help bridge that gap in needs while promoting conservation at the same time.

As a conservation programming element, ACS is yet another tool that AWF is using to further the conservation of critical ecosystems and protection of species. In MLW, many of AWF's efforts center around protecting the endangered bonobo, which faces threats from habitat loss to poaching. Ilima is one of the many communities that sits in the midst of bonobo habitat. AWF working with the community and government agencies to rebuild a dilapidated school provided local residents an

additional incentive to protect this ecosystem and allowed us to build the link between education, community and conservation.

The Ilima campus was designed with core ACS principles:

- Easily maintainable buildings constructed with locally available materials;
- Construction techniques and site layout that address climatic conditions;
- Quality teacher housing to attract and retain skilled educators; and
- Campuses informed by local culture and traditions.



Billy Dodson

TOP: School attendance has increased by 30 per cent since the new Ilima School has opened. ABOVE: Dignitaries, including representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Congolese wildlife authority, attended the school's inaugural ceremony.

The result is a light-filled, fun place to learn, with indoor and outdoor learning spaces that provide children with opportunities for hands-on appreciation of their environment. Since the construction of the new school, attendance is up 30 per cent, reinforcing AWF's belief that quality infrastructure is a key component to a good education.

### Early stages of support

The ACS programme is at the early stages of its support of the Ilima Conservation Primary School. Building the capacity of teachers and

supporting additional conservation and environmental activities at the school are ongoing components of the programme that will continue to promote the links between education and conservation. If the students' smiling faces during the opening ceremony was any indication, Ilima has a great start. ■

## How Best to Promote Conservation Farming

By **Kathleen Fitzgerald** *Vice president, conservation strategy*

In July 2013, African Wildlife Capital (AWC) provided a loan to Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO), a company that strives to increase food and income security for small-scale farmers in exchange for their commitment to conservation. COMACO operates in Zambia's Luangwa Valley, an ecologically significant landscape that includes North and South Luangwa National Parks.

A majority of the residents in the valley live below the poverty line and are reliant on natural resources. This results in charcoal production, habitat loss and conversion from farm expansion, and poaching. Simultaneously, the population is increasing and the impacts of climate change are exacerbating the ecological stressors.

Wildlife and habitat loss trends in the Luangwa Valley are not positive. Roan antelope and puku, for example, have declined significantly between 2009 and 2011. During the same period, elephant carcasses attributed to poaching and retaliatory killing increased from 49 to 104 per year. If residents are not provided alternative livelihoods, declines in habitat and wildlife will continue.

The farmers engaged with COMACO are trained on conservation agriculture practices, such as minimal tillage, water retention and crop diversification. Produce is purchased by COMACO, which then makes peanut butter, soy products and chicken feed under the well-known 'It's Wild' brand.

Farmer cooperatives sign conservation pledges and conservation plans are developed at a Chiefdom level. To assess compliance, COMACO conducts an annual audit on approximately 10 per cent of the farmers. Chiefdoms are ranked based on three components: wildlife, forestry and conservation agriculture. Scores are

shared with the chiefs with an explanation. Chiefdoms that receive a high score qualify for premium crop prices. Products from farmers violating the covenants may not be purchased.

Competition may disrupt COMACO's ability to succeed. A recent study found that a majority of farmers sampled preferred to sell to other buyers. Companies such as Cargill and Dunavant are in competition, with no conservation strings attached. Cotton and tobacco, both ecologically damaging crops, are being promoted. Likewise other so-called 'conservation farming' projects operate in the landscape, using pesticides and chemicals and covering large areas with single crops, begging the question of where the conservation aspect comes in.

### Ensuring conservation

COMACO now involves 107,000 farmers. At this scale, the key question becomes: How can it effectively monitor compliance and ensure conservation outcomes?

AWC recently conducted a conservation audit and found that the overall framework and concept of COMACO remains solid, but shoring up the conservation side is critical. Among other actions, AWC recommended stronger conservation agreements, partners, stiffer penalties for non-compliance and, longer term, a bonus for communities increasing forest cover or wildlife populations. All of this, of course, requires additional staffing and funding—and when operating a business, these must be considered in the context of economic sustainability.

A former poacher and COMACO member explained why he gave up poaching to farm: Poaching is a risky business. We can either be arrested or thrown in jail. When I heard about the alternatives provided by COMACO, I opted out." This was a clear demonstration of COMACO's value. Likewise, it reinforces the need for the more traditional conservation approaches—effective scouts, protected area management, tight land-use plans—to happen simultaneously, thereby creating risk in pursuing unsustainable actions while also providing an alternative livelihood. ■



Golden Valley Agriculture Research (GART)



Marie Frei



Shana Laursen

LEFT TOP: Conservation agriculture practices ensure crop productivity while minimising impacts on the ecosystem. MIDDLE: Zambia's Luangwa Valley is an ecologically significant landscape that includes two national parks. BOTTOM: Populations of roan antelope have declined in the past few years, prompting the need for conservation-oriented companies such as COMACO.



AWF has implemented projects in the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania to balance conservation and productive agriculture.

Ruaha Carnivore Project

## In S. Tanzania, Reconciling Wildlife, Agriculture

By **Andrea Athanas** *Programme design manager, agriculture and energy*

**S**outhern Tanzania hosts some of the world's richest and most inspiring wildlife, including nearly 50 per cent of the world's remaining lions, elephant numbers among the largest in Africa, chimpanzees in the hills to the Central West, and antelopes including the rare puku and lesser kudu.

The government of Tanzania has strived to protect critical habitat through the creation of three protected areas: Selous Game Reserve and Ruaha and Katavi National Parks. But the region's landscape is transforming, as agriculture and settlement have expanded along the road and rail network that connects the capital of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, to Lusaka in Zambia. Agriculture is a pillar of the Tanzanian economy, and the region tops national lists in production of potatoes, tomatoes, onions, and tea and softwood timber products. This agricultural production is now poised for growth, with the region singled out for agriculture-based economic development through the Southern Agriculture Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT).

### Remarkable opportunity

Historically agriculture and conservation have been viewed as opposing land uses. Cropped land threatens wildlife by converting critical habitat to monoculture plantations and removing species from food chains. Soils and waterways are impacted by fertiliser runoff. At the same time, wildlife trample and graze crops and kill livestock—impacts that are economically devastating for poor smallholder farmers. AWF is working to ensure that emerging agricultural systems are done in a way that does not harm the continent's globally important wildlife and ecological processes. After

examining the evolving situation in Southern Tanzania, our experts have identified a remarkable opportunity in the region for expansive conservation and appropriate, productive agriculture at scale.

This will be built through:

- Macro- and micro-level planning to ensure appropriate land-use zones;
- Strengthening management of the network of core conservation areas;
- Enhancing the biodiversity value of existing protected areas by securing 'mega-linkages' through conservation easements, community conservation and wildlife management areas (or WMAs) and through careful planning of intended infrastructure developments;
- Generating value from conservation through investments in a vibrant tourism economy; and
- Incentivizing sustainable intensification of agriculture in appropriate areas to maximise yields, minimise ecological impacts and build resilience to climate change.

Newly established AWF operations in Ifakara under the Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors in Africa (SUSTAIN) programme and Mbeya—with support from the MacArthur Foundation and Barr Foundation as well as the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund—mark the start of this effort.

The Mbeya programme started a year ago and has reached three districts—Rungwe, Makete and Mbeya Rural—with a number of activities.

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