

African Wildlife News

Billy Dodson

1961–2012

YOUR SUPPORT AT WORK IN THE AFRICAN HEARTLANDS



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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A 6-year partnership cultivates quality coffee, environmental stewardship.



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AWF introduces online tool for eco-conscious travelers.



Presidential Press Corps

AWF, with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), recently gifted 17,100 acres for the creation of a new national park in Kenya. Here, AWF executives and trustees and a TNC representative pose with President Mwai Kibaki (center) at a special ceremony.

AWF Works to Establish Kenya's Newest National Park

Future Laikipia National Park Will Protect Critical Migratory Corridor for Wildlife and Tourism

By Mayu Mishina and Lewis Crary

Located in one of Kenya's most iconic tourism landscapes, the Laikipia district in Central Kenya provides an important habitat for an abundance of wildlife. The region is home to a large percentage of the country's elephants and the endangered Grevy's zebra, among other species.

And, thanks to the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), it will soon be home to Kenya's newest national park—reportedly the country's first in some 20-plus years.

Conservation Priority

The property for the new Laikipia National Park had long been targeted as a conservation priority because of its strategic location in a regional wildlife linkage. Following six years of difficult negotiations, AWF facilitated the acquisition of the property from a private landowner for US\$4 million. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) provided half of the funding for the purchase, while AWF provided the other half.

AWF officially handed over the land to Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki in a ceremony last November, during AWF's annual trustee meeting and 50th Anniversary celebration in

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Celebrating Wins, Confronting Challenges

We've been in a celebratory mood of late. When you read our cover story, you'll understand why: Thanks to your continued support, AWF was able to donate land that will help Kenya establish a new national park.

To be named Laikipia National Park, this 17,100-acre parcel of land was once a privately owned ranch. After several years of difficult negotiations—and plenty of anxiety over whether our efforts would come to fruition—AWF was finally able to help transition ownership of this vital property to the Kenya Wildlife Service. This past November, as a special part of our 50th Anniversary celebration in Nairobi, Kenya, we officially handed over this land to Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki.

It was a fitting end to our 50th Anniversary year, but, more importantly, a big win for the wildlife and people of Kenya. That's because this open savanna is not just an isolated piece of habitat but is part of a larger wildlife corridor across our Samburu Heartland. Fitting Laikipia back into the larger ecosystem puzzle means that habitat will remain ecologically intact for wildlife and open up economic opportunities for local people. I look forward to seeing the many positive impacts that Laikipia National Park will have in Kenya.

As AWF celebrates this big conservation achievement, however, we confront challenges elsewhere. Last fall, Congolese

authorities announced the alarming increase in the poaching of live infant gorillas, presumably for sale on the exotic animal market. This news turns my stomach—but it deepens my resolve to continue AWF's efforts in mountain gorilla conservation in our Virunga Heartland.

Rest assured, AWF, through the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), is keeping abreast of what is happening on this issue. We are also actively working with wildlife authorities to combat this terrible crime and continue the gains we've made in mountain gorilla conservation over the years.

One important conservation activity we support via IGCP is the regular census of the mountain gorilla population. I'm sure it seems like we *just* announced the results of our Virunga Massif mountain gorilla population (a 26 percent gain, you might recall)... so perhaps you find it odd to discover that a new mountain gorilla census began last fall, this time in Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Park.

As you'll read in this issue, mountain gorilla censuses take significant time and manpower to conduct. They are a vitally important way for us to determine which of our conservation efforts are working, and which need to be reassessed. In light of the infant gorilla poaching issue, I'm sure you'll agree that it's ever more important for us to keep track of this endangered species and figure out how best we can combat threats to this population.

AWF will continue to confront these conservation challenges. And, together with your help, I'm confident we'll have more conservation wins in the future. Thank you for your ongoing support of AWF.

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



John Butler

Dove Weale



A regular mountain gorilla census provides critical feedback on how conservation efforts are going. Given the recent spate of infant gorilla poaching, such an effort becomes doubly important for wildlife authorities and AWF/IGCP to assess what strategies are working. See our story on the census on the opposite page.

Counting on Conservation

Census Offers Opportunity to Assess Which Mountain Gorilla Conservation Efforts Work

“When AWF first began working in this region some 30 years ago, community members did not know much about the mountain gorilla—nor did they care to,” observed Eugène Rutagarama, Virunga Heartland director for AWF and director of the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), a coalition of AWF, Fauna & Flora International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

But throughout the decades-long partnership between AWF and IGCP and the organizations’ development work with communities, conservation of the critically endangered mountain gorilla has gained traction as a worthy notion among local residents.

How do we know?

There’s the anecdotal evidence, sure, but the proof is in the mountain gorilla numbers. Through regular censuses of the populations in the Virunga Massif and Bwindi—the two regions in which the world’s remaining mountain gorillas are found—AWF through IGCP has been able to track the consistent growth of the species. In 2010, for example, AWF/IGCP announced the happy news that the mountain gorilla population in the Virunga Massif had increased by 26 percent between 2003 and 2010, to 480 individuals.

Another census kicked off this past fall, this time to determine the mountain gorilla population in Bwindi. The census was conducted by the Uganda Wildlife Authority, IGCP, and the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, with support from the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature, the Rwanda Development Board, local governments, and several partner organizations.

“In relative terms, the census of the Bwindi population is coming quite soon after the census of the Virunga Massif population,” noted Maryke Gray, IGCP technical advisor. “This will give us some good insights into the status of the species as a whole.”

Significant Undertaking

Conducting a census is no easy task. “Mountain gorilla censuses require significant amounts of time, resources, and manpower,” said Craig Sholley, vice president of philanthropy and marketing for AWF and former head of the Mountain Gorilla Project, a precursor to IGCP. “Even the coordination ahead of the census can be a monumental undertaking, as each census involves the wildlife authorities from three different countries, several conservation organizations, and an army of volunteers.”



Anna Behm Masozera/IGCP

Team members review the map of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda and plan their next reconnaissance trail.

The recent Bwindi effort involved almost 100 people trekking through the dense, hilly forests of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park to search for fresh mountain gorilla trails. When one was found, teams followed it so as to analyze three consecutive nights of gorilla nests, counting and recording detailed data at each nest site. (Every night, adult mountain gorillas individually build a nest out of vegetation.) This technique is called an indirect sweep.

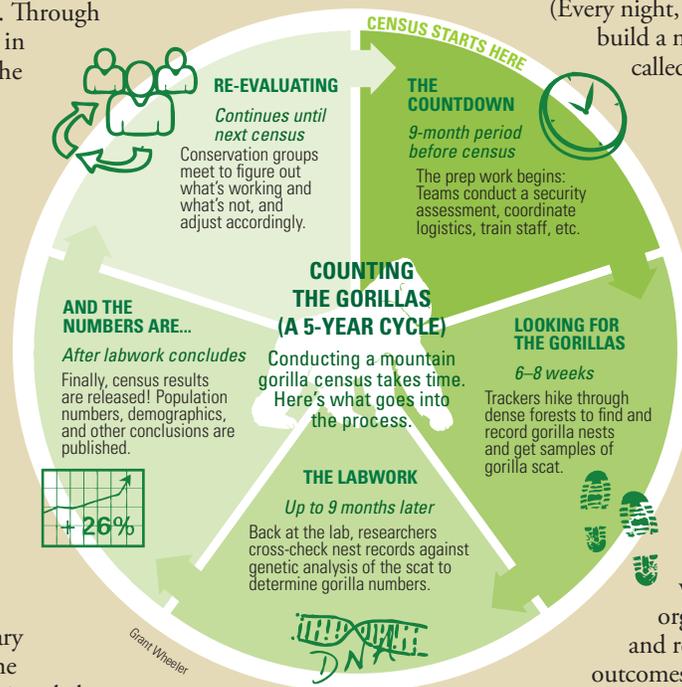
Trackers also collected fecal samples from the nests. A genetic analysis is being conducted from the samples, to ensure an accurate population count and prevent the undercounting or double-counting of individuals. A complete health screen will also be conducted from these samples.

Why Bother?

The indirect sweep can take upwards of several weeks, but completing it does not mean that census work is finished. In addition to performing genetic analysis, wildlife authorities and conservation organizations will collaborate to evaluate and report census results—the Bwindi outcomes are expected in the second half of the year—and later, to refine mountain gorilla conservation strategies. All told, the entire census process takes a considerable amount of time.

Given the time- and resource-consuming nature of these censuses, people may wonder why we even bother. “The mountain gorilla population is under constant threat,” Sholley explained, noting the apparent rise of live infant gorillas being poached for sale on the market. “By keeping an accurate count of the species and determining which of our conservation efforts are working, we can assist wildlife authorities in ensuring that the species will not just survive, but thrive, over the long term.”

Adds Rutagarama, “Our continued census efforts are showing that we have successfully changed the course of decline in the mountain gorilla population into one of significant gains. We eagerly await the results of the Bwindi census.” ■



As this graphic shows, conducting a mountain gorilla census takes significant time, resources, manpower, and coordination.



Closing the Coffee Chapter—but Not the Book

As Kenya Heartland Coffee Project Comes to an End, Farmers and New Partners Begin the Next Chapter

By Kathleen Garrigan

Some partnerships are forged over coffee... and some, for the sake of coffee. AWF’s six-year partnership with Starbucks Coffee Co. and 5,000 Kenyan farmers under the Kenya Heartland Coffee Project, which concluded in December, typified the latter.

Here was an example of smart collaboration between a for-profit and non-profit that cultivated a better bottom line, better benefits to farmers, and better environmental stewardship. After six years, the culture of coffee production in a small but important coffee-growing area of Central Kenya has shifted.

“The Kenya Heartland Coffee Project combined Starbucks expertise in coffee quality, agronomy, and ethical and sustainable coffee-buying practices with AWF’s detailed knowledge of Kenya’s people, culture, and natural resources,” said Chris von Zastrow, director of sustainability at Starbucks Coffee Trading Co.

In September, von Zastrow joined AWF, government officials, coffee industry representatives, and more than 200 farmers in the

foothills of Mt. Kenya to reflect on the project’s success and the importance of partnership. Also in attendance were representatives from Kimathi University, where a Coffee Tasting Laboratory opened its doors in 2009.

“The project achieved so much and laid a wonderful foundation for coffee farming in the area,” said Daudi Sumba, AWF’s vice president of operations. “We urge Kimathi University, Kenya’s Ministry of Agriculture, and the Coffee Board of Kenya to continue supporting the farmers to ensure sustainability.”

“The project achieved so much and laid a wonderful foundation for coffee farming in the area,” said Daudi Sumba, AWF’s vice president of operations. “We urge Kimathi University, Kenya’s Ministry of Agriculture, and the Coffee Board of Kenya to continue supporting the farmers to ensure sustainability.”

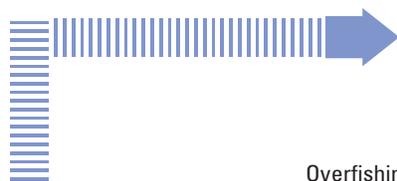
Cultivating Conservation

At a farm where rows of coffee beans dry under the sun on raised tables, the green crown of Nyeri Hill rises in the distance. On the other side, Aberdare National Park—767 sq. km of forest, mountains, and streams—stretches to the west and from north to south. The park offers sanctuary to a



Kathleen Garrigan

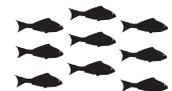
TEACH A MAN TO FISH



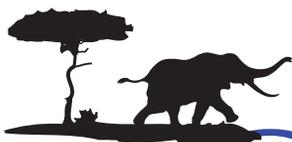
Restored fish populations in the Zambezi River will strengthen local livelihoods, while the aquaculture enterprise will yield employment and economic benefits.



Overfishing along the Zambezi River threatens livelihoods of local fishermen. AWF, together with the Inyambo community and other partners, is implementing a fisheries management plan and establishing a sustainable aquaculture enterprise.



Nine fish ponds have been constructed, with a goal to build a total of 13 in the coming months. Fish fingerlings native to the Zambezi River will be bred in the ponds. In addition, water pumps have been installed and villagers are now accessing water from taps instead of the river.



Grant Wheeler



variety of animal species, including leopards, lions, and elephants. The Aberdares also serve as an important water catchment for surrounding areas, and is the main source of water—and electricity by way of hydropower—for Nairobi, 100 kilometers to the south.

A 2003 report released by the United Nations Environmental Programme revealed that deforestation was slowly eroding the park’s delicate ecosystem. The degradation, if left unchecked, would continue to fragment habitat for park wildlife and disrupt the ecosystem services the forest provides to farms and towns.

Thus, the Kenya Heartland Coffee Project aimed to inform communities about the connection between their livelihoods as coffee farmers and the forested areas nearby.

“The project helped build capacity on reforestation among the coffee farmers,” said Robert Thuo, a former AWF agronomist who shepherded the project from its beginning. “Given the realized effects of climate change, farmers came to learn that tree planting was critical.”

In partnership with Kenya Forest Service, farmers implemented reforestation schemes at sites around Aberdare and Mt. Kenya National Parks, where coffee and tea cultivation was high.

Farmers have implemented other practices to reduce their impact on the environment, such as reducing waste and using agrochemicals on their farms. Ecopulpers, which separate the pulp from the coffee bean, have also been purchased by AWF and installed at two farms to minimize water use and waste while saving energy.

Next Chapter

In its six years, the coffee project illustrated to farmers their role in the global business of coffee production—as cultivators, as environmental stewards, and as suppliers of a product whose consumers had developed a taste for ethically sourced coffee. It also showed

“This project demonstrated that creative partnerships can safeguard the ecological and economic vitality of Africa’s landscapes.”

—Daudi Sumba,
Vice President of Operations, AWF

that economic development need not be at the expense of the environment.

“This project demonstrated that creative partnerships can safeguard the ecological and economic vitality of Africa’s landscapes,” said Sumba.

With new partners, including Kimathi University and the Kenya Forest Service, farmers in Central

Kenya are carrying forward the objectives of the Kenya Heartland Coffee Project.

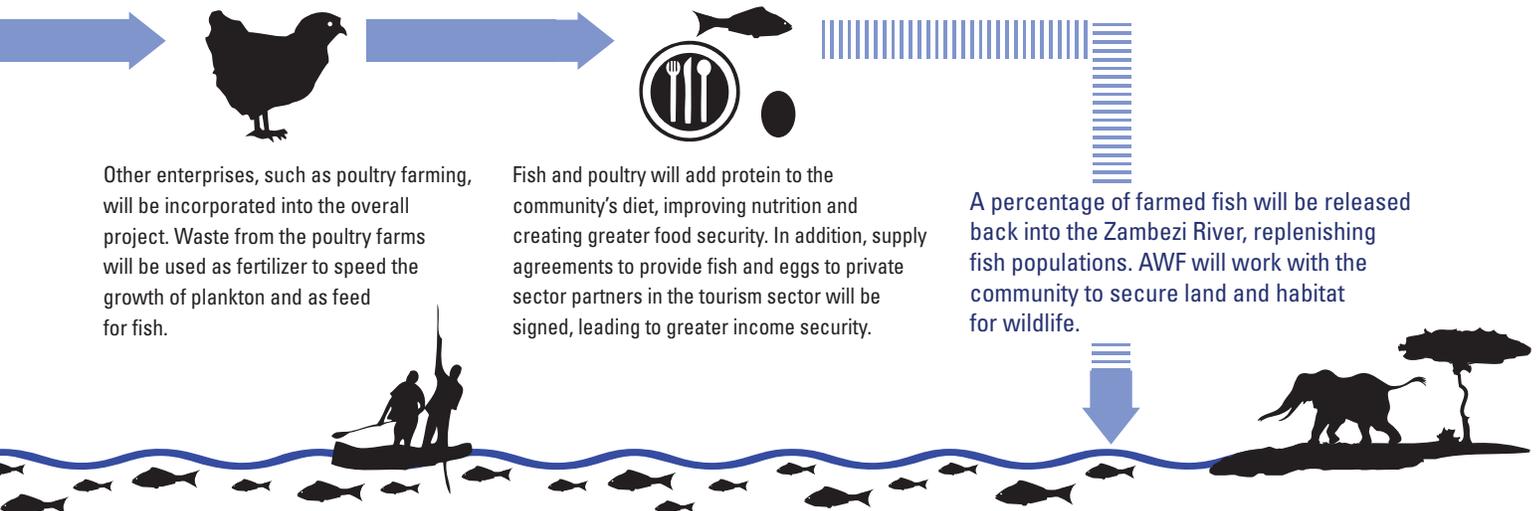
“As we close out this successful partnership, I am encouraged by the farmers’ engagement with C.A.F.E. practices as a guideline for better management of social, environmental, and transparency issues,” said von Zastrow of Starbucks, referring to the company’s Coffee and Farmer Equity practices for producing ethically and sustainably grown coffee. “The farmers, local community leaders, and cooperatives have hopefully been empowered to keep the project initiatives rolling from here.” ■



Benson Lengalen (left), a natural resources management officer for AWF, and a representative from Kihuyo Coffee Farm, one of the coffee farms that participated in the Kenya Heartland Coffee Project, discuss the coffee production process.

Kathleen Garrigan

In Zambia’s Inyambo Chiefdom, AWF is working with local fishermen to protect the Zambezi River, their lifeblood, and deliver economic benefits to an impoverished area.



Other enterprises, such as poultry farming, will be incorporated into the overall project. Waste from the poultry farms will be used as fertilizer to speed the growth of plankton and as feed for fish.

Fish and poultry will add protein to the community’s diet, improving nutrition and creating greater food security. In addition, supply agreements to provide fish and eggs to private sector partners in the tourism sector will be signed, leading to greater income security.

A percentage of farmed fish will be released back into the Zambezi River, replenishing fish populations. AWF will work with the community to secure land and habitat for wildlife.

Laikipia National Park *(Cont'd from cover)*

Nairobi, Kenya. The ceremony took place at the Harambee House in Nairobi, and was attended by other representatives from the Kenyan government, members of the AWF board of trustees, a TNC representative, and specially invited AWF supporters.

“This is a wonderful gift to future generations of Kenyans,” said President Kibaki. “We are committed to wildlife and will preserve this land.”

Added David Mwiraria, chairman of the Kenya Wildlife Service, “The future Laikipia National Park will be a nucleus for conservation and Kenya Wildlife Service in Laikipia. We thank the Honorable President for his commitment to conservation and assure AWF and The Nature Conservancy that this land will be well looked after.”

The 17,100-acre parcel of land is situated in Central Laikipia, in AWF’s Samburu Heartland. The property sits in one of the

richest wildlife ecosystems outside of officially protected areas in Kenya. It provides an open savanna ecosystem that supports a variety of species, from the endangered Grevy’s zebra, eland, and elephant to lesser-known wildlife, such as the patas monkey, Somali ostrich, and Beisa oryx.

“The impact of Laikipia National Park will extend well beyond its borders,” said Patrick Bergin, CEO of AWF. “Together, African Wildlife Foundation and Kenya Wildlife Service are conserving an ecosystem that is vital to this region, while also enhancing the economic livelihood of Kenyans living around the park. Laikipia’s protection will stimulate local commerce, particularly tourism.”

Historic Migration Corridor

“Securing land for a future Laikipia National Park aptly demonstrates AWF’s approach to conservation,” noted Helen Gichohi, president of AWF. “We targeted an area with significant ecological potential that was under severe threat and worked diligently with our partners, both governmental and otherwise, to secure it. We now entrust this property to the Kenyan people. We are excited about what this means for the region.”

The area around this land is dominated by private ranches that support tourism and wildlife. This property sits among several of them, including the 70,000-acre, government-owned ADC Mutara Ranch, supported in part by AWF; the privately owned, 110,000-acre Ol Pejeta Ranch; and the 49,000-acre Seger Ranch.

These ranches function as safe havens for wildlife, and the new Laikipia National Park will connect these vital properties, allowing for the unimpeded movement of wildlife. This is of particular significance for wide-ranging species, such as the elephant. Central Kenya hosts the country’s second-largest elephant population.

“People are at the core of our conservation work in Kenya, and it’s the people of Kenya who are gaining ownership of a significant piece of land,” said David Banks, Africa director for The Nature Conservancy. “As the peoples’ guardian of this land, we know that the Kenya Wildlife Service will be a good steward.”

Observed Julius Kipng’etich, director of Kenya Wildlife Service, “We are grateful to the African Wildlife Foundation

Billy Dodson



Eddie Sampore



Billy Dodson



The future Laikipia National Park is located in AWF’s Samburu Heartland, which is home to about 8 percent of Kenya’s wildlife. These are just a sampling of some of the species found in this region.

Billy Dodson



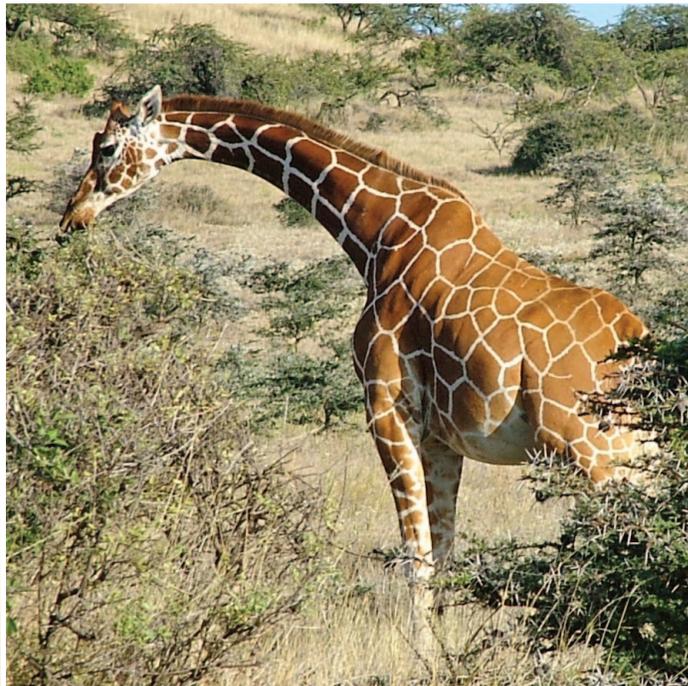
and The Nature Conservancy for helping to secure this strategic property. The future Laikipia National Park links the wildlife-friendly private and group ranches to the north with protected areas to the south, occupying one of the last remaining gaps in this historic corridor that once extended from Mt. Kenya through Laikipia into Samburu and on to the Mathews Range. This passageway is especially important during periods of drought, because wildlife is dependent upon the areas to the south that provide water sources.”

A Capstone, and a New Beginning

The creation of a new national park will be a significant addition to the Laikipia District for tourism and wildlife. A new national park will ensure that this area continues to flourish as a premier tourism destination long into the future.

Observed former AWF Board Chair Dennis Keller, “This new Laikipia National Park will provide a wonderful capstone to our 50th Anniversary year.”

New Board Chair David Thomson agreed, adding his own optimistic outlook: “AWF’s work in helping to establish Laikipia National Park is a triumph for both the people of Kenya and for AWF,” he said. “I am hopeful of what we can achieve in our next 50 years of conservation work in Africa.” ■



Paul Muoria



Billy Dodson



Background Photo: Paul Thomson



Craig R. Sholley

Wildlife Watch

Roan Antelope

By Madeline Johnson

Recently, Kenya Wildlife Service reported that the country's roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*) population was on the decline. Its last remaining refuge in Kenya is the Lambwe Valley, only 10 km from Lake Victoria.

Historically, roan antelope roamed throughout southern Kenya, but the species' numbers in the country have dramatically dropped from 200 individuals in the 1970s to only about 50 at present. Reasons for this decline include genetic factors, predation, and disease, as well as threats to the species' habitat.

The roan antelope is the fourth-largest antelope species, standing at around a meter and a half. It is found most commonly in wooded grasslands. In addition to Kenya, the species is found in southern and West Africa, including AWF's Regional Parc W Heartland.

Named for its "roan," or reddish-brown color, the antelope has a white underbelly. Both males and females

boast distinct black-and-white "clown" masks, though these facial features are darker in males than in females.

This species usually lives in herds of six to 20 females, with one dominant male. Both sexes have backward-curving horns. Although they are not territorial, males often use these horns to fight for dominance among their herd. They will also use their horns to defend their harem. Predators, such as lions, have been gored by the horns of a roan antelope.

The roan antelope breeds year-round but only bears a single calf at a time. One to two weeks before birth, the mother will seclude herself from the herd and stay isolated until her calf is born. Once the calf is born, the mother conceals it in tall grass for most of the day and rejoins the herd, which can leave the calf vulnerable to predators, such as hyenas, wild dogs, and leopards. She will return to her young around sunset and stay with it through the night. The calf joins the herd after four or five weeks.



Mark Boulton

Given the roan antelope's precarious state in Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service has created a national task force to oversee a conservation management and species recovery plan. The roan antelope is one of the most distinct and unique features of the Lambwe Valley. AWF believes that through land conservation, we can give this antelope the room it needs to flourish. AWF will be keeping a close eye to ensure that this beautiful species prospers for future generations. ■

When Taking a Trip Also Means Giving Back

New Tool Allows Travelers to Explore AWF's Eco-Lodges

Travelers seeking a one-stop resource on ecotourist and philanthropic travel opportunities in Africa can now visit AWF's Conservation Enterprise Explorer. This new tool on AWF's website spotlights AWF's conservation enterprise lodges, which provide conservation benefits to the surrounding lands and wildlife while imparting economic benefits to local communities.

"Travelers are increasingly wanting to 'give back' on their travels, either by supporting conservation efforts at their vacation destination or through a philanthropic component during their trip," said Moses Kanene, AWF's director of enterprise development. "We launched the Conservation Enterprise Explorer as a service to those wishing to stay at such eco-lodges and as an additional way to support the many conservation enterprise lodges AWF has helped establish over the years."



A new tool on Awf.org allows people interested in eco-tourist or philanthropic travel to explore AWF's many conservation enterprise lodges. The Conservation Enterprise Explorer provides detailed information for each profiled lodge, including the conservation logic behind AWF's support of the lodge.

The new website module provides detailed information for each lodge:

- Location, number of beds, general resort ambience, services provided, and the typical wildlife found in the area;
- The conservation logic behind the lodge;
- The economic benefit that the lodge brings to local communities; and
- The key species being conserved.

The initial launch of the Explorer features three of AWF's flagship conservation enterprises, Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge in Rwanda, Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge in Uganda, and the tented camps of Manyara Ranch Conservancy in Tanzania. More

lodges will soon be added, and additional functionality may be incorporated, such as the ability for website visitors to directly book their stay through the Conservation Enterprise Explorer. ■

Visit the Conservation Enterprise Explorer at awf.org/conservationtourism.