

# African Wildlife NEWS

*Your support at work in Africa's landscapes*



Since the first class of detection dogs and handlers graduated from AWF's Conservation Canine Programme in July of 2015, AWF and its wildlife authority partners has achieved remarkable success in uncovering smuggled ivory.

## What happens once ivory is found?

How can a handler tell that a detection dog has found ivory? According to Will Powell, director of AWF's Conservation Canine Programme, the dog shows a change in behavior, demonstrating "particular interest" in a piece of luggage or cargo. Sometimes, this may result in a group of bags being pulled off a conveyor and lined up for greater inspection. The dog will sniff the suitcases and sit when it finds one that has the ivory hidden inside.

Once a dog sits, the handler gives it a reward for a job well done: a rubber Kong toy, which all the AWF-trained detection dogs love. The handler then calls in all the other agencies working at the site. This would include the airports authority, police, the wildlife authority, even immigrations personnel. Photos are taken and suspects are processed in preparation for arrest and trial.



## Dogs in the Groove

*AWF-trained detection dogs demonstrate their effectiveness—by making 4 ivory busts in a single week*

**T**hey say good things come in threes. But for AWF's Conservation Canine Programme, the magic number turned out to be four. That's the number of times AWF-trained detection dogs uncovered ivory hidden in luggage at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in early January—in a single week.

"Four ivory busts in one week is ridiculous," says Dr. Philip Muruthi, vice president of species protection for AWF.

It's great news for AWF's detection dog program, which launched only last year. Eight dogs and 13 handlers graduated from AWF training in July 2015, with four dog-and-handler teams subsequently dispatched to Mombasa, Kenya. The remaining four teams were deployed to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Since then, Will Powell, director of AWF's Conservation Canine Programme, and his staff have been working closely with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Tanzania's

Wildlife Division to on-board the teams and, in Kenya's case, ensure coordination with KWS's existing detection dog teams.

The process has, admittedly, taken longer than anticipated.

### Becoming 1 team

Even after having undergone all their training in Arusha, Tanzania—the same geographic region where they were deployed—the dogs needed time to acclimate to Mombasa's and Dar es Salaam's warmer coastal climes. It took longer still to receive permission to begin working at the cities' respective airports and seaports.

"Early on, we were having difficulty getting access to critical trafficking locations," explains Powell. The first few weeks after graduation consisted largely of daily walks on the beach to maintain the dogs' exercise regimen and allow them to adapt to the hotter temperatures. Meanwhile, Powell met with

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The African Wildlife Foundation, together with the people of Africa, works to ensure the wildlife and wild lands of Africa will endure forever.

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# Generosity and Inspiration



**A** lot can happen in a year. Take AWF’s detection dog program. The first group of detection dogs arrived at our training facility in Tanzania in the early part of 2015. At that time, they had yet to be trained to sniff out ivory and rhino horn in luggage and cargo containers. AWF had yet to interview, select and train potential dog handlers with Kenya Wildlife Service and Tanzania’s Wildlife Division, our first two partners in this effort. The teams had yet to deploy to any airports or seaports to begin their detection work.

But by January of this year—less than 12 months later—the dogs were on the job. They had also discovered ivory about to be smuggled off the African continent—not just once, or twice, but an astonishing four times. Did I mention the finds occurred in a single week?

Our detection dogs have done a remarkable job in a relatively short time. Each year, tons of ivory are being smuggled undetected from Africa and an incredible amount of effort and expertise must be exerted to halt it. Working with several wildlife authority partners throughout the continent, AWF’s dogs are now an instrumental part of teams that search luggage and cargo holds to identify smuggled wildlife products and bring the “bad guys” to justice. It’s not been easy, as you’ll read in our cover story. The credit truly goes to the hard work of our conservation canine director, Will Powell, and the dedicated teams of dogs and handlers!

**AWF’s dogs are now an instrumental part of teams that bring the ‘bad guys’ to justice.**

Of course, none of these ivory finds would have even been possible without the generosity of AWF members like you. Your love of Africa’s wildlife and your desire, like ours, to ensure Africa still has plenty of wild spaces for wildlife to call home, is making it possible for us to not only catch ivory traffickers at airports but also protect wildlife in places such as southern Tanzania (see page 7) and Zimbabwe (see “New dawn for Hwange” on page 3).

Africa’s wildlife is a wonderful legacy to leave behind for future generations—as AWF Kilimanjaro Society members Billy and Cheryl Geffon well know. I encourage you to read their story on page 6, then see if you might not be inspired to also leave a legacy of conservation for future generations. And if you need added inspiration, check out the supplement between pages 4 and 5. Featuring winning wildlife photos from the Nature’s Best Photography Windland Smith Rice International Awards, the supplement will remind you just why we’re all working so hard in Africa!

With heartfelt thanks,

Patrick J. Bergin, Ph.D.  
Chief executive officer  
and AWF Kilimanjaro  
Society member

RIGHT: Check out Africa’s wildlife from the comfort of your armchair! Go to page 4, where you’ll find our annual supplement of winners from the Nature’s Best Photography competition.



# AWF roundup



## Hong Kong proposes ivory ban

WildAid

In January, the chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region announced that the Hong Kong government will ban the sales of ivory. It also plans to increase maximum penalties for endangered species trafficking to seven years. A report on Hong Kong's ivory trade released by AWF and WildAid last October found that ivory traders routinely replenished legally held ivory stocks with illegal ivory from recently poached African elephants.

**1,338** Rhinos poached across Africa in 2015. Though South Africa's rhino poaching numbers decreased from 2014, it may have been countered by an increase in neighboring countries.

## AWF, Thomson promote tourism & conservation

AWF and Thomson Safaris, a longtime safari provider in Tanzania, have partnered to promote sound conservation efforts in East Africa. The partnership features a membership to AWF for all Thomson Safari guests, allowing safari-goers the opportunity to contribute to programs that combat poaching, promote education and develop sustainable agricultural practices. For those who are already AWF members, a mention of AWF this spring will give them a US\$500 discount on their safari with Thomson.

## Technology to advance education

AWF's African Conservation Schools Program has secured 28 government-approved ZeduPad tablets, preloaded with the Zambian primary school curriculum, for use at Lupani Community School in Zambia.

Tony Barnett

## New dawn for Hwange

Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe has endured its share of bad news recently. It was the area where Cecil the lion was illegally hunted by American dentist Walter Palmer, and the park where elephants died from cyanide poisoning. But a new dawn has arrived for the park, according to Edwin Tambara, conservation planner for AWF. In 2014, AWF began working with the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and local stakeholders to develop a new management plan for the park. This past February, the government of Zimbabwe approved the plan.



Alistair Pole

"Hwange National Park is one of Zimbabwe's most valuable resources, contributing significantly to tourism and biodiversity conservation," says Tambara, who helped oversee the plan development process. "The plan offers a consistent, agreed-upon approach to managing a protected area and offers proven wildlife-based revenue-generating ideas for the parks authority to implement."

## Political commitment

Anti-poaching efforts in Africa are increasingly putting courageous lives on the line: A British pilot died in January after the helicopter he'd been flying over a game reserve in northern Tanzania was shot down by elephant poachers. The pilot, who had been helping in a manhunt for those poachers, later died from his injuries. By February, nine suspects had been arrested in connection with the incident. The government also announced a special unit to address the country's poaching problem.

In December, it supported Tanzania's Wildlife Division in holding an interagency law enforcement workshop to enhance collaboration and understanding of the damaging effects of elephant poaching and ivory trafficking on the country's wildlife, economy and civilians. One positive result that may be attributable to the workshop: Convicted wildlife traffickers have been receiving increasingly stiffer sentences in recent months. AWF is planning another judicial sensitization workshop in Tanzania this spring.

According to John Salehe, Tanzania country director for AWF, there had previously not been strong political commitment toward prosecuting ivory traffickers. But AWF is working to change that.



AWF

Continued from page 1

various officials to explain where we needed entry.

Eventually, the teams were able to get started. Powell observes, “With the new administration in Tanzania now in place, it has suddenly become much easier for us to work where we need to work.”

In Kenya, two of the AWF-trained dog teams were assigned to cover Mombasa’s Moi International Airport. The other two teams joined KWS’s existing dog squad at Jomo Kenyatta. But flight searches were haphazard—hence not yielding much by way of ivory discoveries.

AWF worked with the KWS team to ensure a more strategic approach whereby nearly all flights would be covered by a dog team, rather than the occasional, random searches that had been taking place. Now, the dogs work almost every day. They also take turns covering the night shift. To minimize potential for corruption and insider tips to traffickers, even handlers don’t know definitively where they and their canine partners might be working on a given day.

“Since the AWF-trained handlers and dogs have arrived, there’s a new enthusiasm and motivation to search for ivory and other illicit wildlife products. The entire team is going to work—and they are becoming one KWS team, rather than AWF vs. KWS,” says Powell. Indeed, though Rocco, a Belgian Malinois trained by AWF, gets credit for a couple of the airport ivory discoveries, at least one was made by an older existing KWS dog, Jack.

### Small but significant

In each case, the contraband consisted of small pieces of ivory—which in the scheme of things may not seem significant, acknowledges Powell. The pieces had been fashioned into necklaces, rings, bangles or other items, and in some cases were hidden in plastic bags or empty cigarette boxes. “From our perspective, however, that our dogs can find these small pieces of concealed, dry worked ivory means any illicit shipments—including larger shipments—will be discovered,” he explains.

All the travelers arrested in connection with the finds were traveling to China: three to Guangzhou, where the Chinese government destroyed 6 tons of confiscated ivory last year. At least two of the travelers were transiting through Kenya from Ghana and Mozambique. All four pleaded guilty to possessing ivory and were fined.

“This should put all travelers attempting to smuggle wildlife products from Africa on alert,” says AWF’s Muruthi.

It’s also confirmation that Nairobi, like Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, is a

significant transit hub for trafficking ivory. When asked why all of these incidents happened at Jomo Kenyatta, Powell simply says: “It’s one of the major hubs for trafficking. There’s a lot in transit, from Mozambique, Uganda and other places. It’s been going on forever—but the KWS team is now in the groove, and we’re making it very difficult for anything to pass through.”

In addition to those four ivory finds, the detection dog work is resulting in more seizures of bush meat and other illicit wildlife products. In March, for example, dog Asja uncovered pangolin scales in the luggage of a traveler going from Nigeria to China.

### No time at all

Encouraged by these discoveries, Powell says the AWF-trained handlers—in both Kenya and Tanzania—are more motivated than ever to do their jobs. And after an initially slow start, they are getting good opportunities to do so. In December, dogs Ram and Diva and their handlers went on special assignment to work a border checkpoint in Lunga Lungu, Kenya, on a road that leads from Tanzania up to Mombasa.

In Dar es Salaam, the dog teams have been given access to work not just at the airport but also the seaport. (Historically, the sizable ivory shipments have been found in seaport cargo rather than airport cargo.) Because the airport and seaport are located quite close to one another, the four Tanzanian dog-and-handler teams move as a unit. To search cargo that is off the ground, a dog and handler jump on a raised trolley that is wheeled to the container. The dog then sniffs at the cargo seam.

**AWF worked with the KWS team to ensure a more strategic approach whereby nearly all flights would be covered by a dog team, rather than the occasional, random searches that had been taking place**

LEFT: In both the Port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and the Port of Mombasa in Kenya, AWF has established a protocol by which detection dogs can sniff incoming cargo without adding time to the process. A movable platform is wheeled up to containers, and dogs jump on and sniff at the seam.



“The process adds no time at all,” according to Powell. “While the containers are being processed for paperwork, we come in and search it in a matter of seconds. It doesn’t slow down the flow of cargo.” Dimensions of the wheeled platform have been communicated to contacts in Mombasa to enable a similar process at that seaport.

The next class of dogs is already on site at AWF’s training facility in Arusha. Powell flew to Europe in late 2015 to procure them and came back with 10 in December. Unlike the last group, which included the motivated Spaniel, Asja, all the canines this time are hardy Malinois or German Shepherds. “You don’t often get Spaniels as good as Asja,” says Powell, while Shepherds tend by their nature to be well suited to this type of work. This latest class, he says, is “super social and clever.”

They are already reportedly sitting on their own, and the canine program director is considering training them to point or at least sit and stare, rather than simply sit, when they find ivory.

These dogs will eventually be deployed to work in Uganda, Mozambique and Ethiopia. Handler selection with wildlife authorities in those countries has begun, with joint training of handlers and dogs to follow. In the meantime, the dogs are being trained in the basics of ivory and rhino horn detection work so they’ll be well versed by the time the handlers arrive.

“An inexperienced handler will have bad timing. They’ll give commands at the wrong time; they’ll make mistakes. We’re going to get these dogs to a level where they’re solid in

detection, constantly testing them during the training process so the dogs will be able to overcome any errors first-time handlers might make,” Powell explains.

But as the first group of canines is already demonstrating, “we’re proving the efficacy of this program,” Powell says. “We are supporting the governments in these countries to create a greater security presence at these airports and seaports. Once the wildlife authorities get into the groove at a location, our strategic approach is ensuring we’re finding the ivory. We haven’t found the tons yet, but it’s only a matter of time.” ■

*EDITOR’S NOTE: Between January and April 2016, AWF-trained detection dogs have been involved in approximately 18 wildlife discoveries (including one rather sizable ivory find by Asja in late March).*

## Detection-worthy dogs

For AWF’s detection dogs, searching for ivory or rhino horn is meant to be fun. But it is hard work and sensitive, delicate types need not apply.

“We’re looking for the drive to search,” explains Will Powell, director of our Conservation Canine Programme.

Powell typically visits respected breeders in Europe to find potential detection dogs. “We’ll take the dog into a big warehouse full of furniture and cupboards. We’ll hide a Kong toy, and we want that dog to keep searching and searching,” he explains.

“We want it to be a big game for them. If they keep going, then that’s what we’re after. If they come back and look

at you, like, ‘Dad, where is it?’—then they’re not coming to Africa.”

A detection dog needs to have a strong personality—“but then there are dogs that are too strong,” says Powell. Therefore, once dogs are winnowed down based on their search drive, the AWF director takes them on field trips into town. “We walk along streets in shopping districts, go up funny little stairs that European towns often have, hang out near bicycles, and see how they are around people,” he says.

The dogs now training in Arusha, Tanzania, passed those tests with flying colors. “They are cool dogs,” reports Powell. “It’s really fun to work with them.”

## Choosing the right handlers

Cultural influences and people’s social interactions with dogs in Africa are different than in the West. Because of this, AWF Conservation Canine Programme Director Will Powell says that most detection dog handlers have little to no experience with dogs when they first come in for training. So how do you choose the right person for the job?

“It’s about heart and care,” says Powell. The director typically asks about the handler’s

background and history with dogs—whether they have dogs at home, whether the dog has a name and so on—to see whether they have an affinity for canines. If possible, he also tries to bring a dog in, to see how potential handlers react. Are they scared? Do they like the pups?

“It’s about reading the signs. The same way I read the dogs, I gauge a potential handler. If I get the right people, then it all works out,” Powell concludes.



Finding the right handlers and detection dogs is as much an art as it is a science—but there are some telltale signs that allow Conservation Canine Programme Director Will Powell to know whether a handler or a dog is up to the job.

# Preserving the Best of the Planet

*After Sept. 11, 2001, a New York couple decides they aren't going to wait to support the causes that are important to them*

**L**ike many New Yorkers, Billy and Cheryl Geffon's lives changed forever on Sept. 11, 2001. The day began like any other, as Billy, a Wall Street money manager, and wife Cheryl, a veteran Newburgh, N.Y., school teacher, left for work. They came home shaken, with a completely new outlook on their priorities.

"It was a game changer. We knew many people who died that day," Billy recalls. "We had always been savers, so we decided then and there that we would retire early. Since then, we have traveled extensively and become much more involved with philanthropy."

The Geffons are involved with the Gary Sinise Foundation and the Harry S. Truman Library Institute. Lifelong animal lovers, they also support animal welfare and conservation organizations. Raised by an uncle in a two-bedroom apartment, Billy was not allowed to have any animals as a child. He laughs as he recalls, "Many years later, when I was getting married, I again lived with my uncle in that apartment. He loves to tell the story that we evicted him a few weeks after the wedding so we could get a puppy!" Since then, Billy and Cheryl—who have been married 45 years—have never been without at least one pet.

## Leaving a karma legacy

Despite neither of them ever having visited Africa, the Geffons support AWF. Billy fondly recalls visiting the elephants at the Bronx Zoo as a child and observing the gorillas with their amazingly human-like behavior. They are horrified at the thought of elephants and rhinos being killed by poachers for the purposes of showing off one's wealth, in the case of elephant ivory, or because of the misconception that rhino horn has medicinal or aphrodisiac qualities.

The couple wanted to therefore be involved with an organization that is working to protect and conserve large wildlife species. "We do our small part, writing checks and allowing the organizations to do the heavy lifting," Billy explains.

The Geffons recently committed a percentage of their estate to AWF through their living trust. Billy explains: "We have done well in life, through a combination of hard work, career guidance and plain, dumb luck. We decided that we want to give away 90 percent of our assets to the foundations and organizations that are inspiring others and preserving the best of the planet. We had always intended to leave our assets to charity, but Sept. 11 forced us to be more focused on where the funds would go.

"We never had children, and I know this is a consideration for parents when planning their estates, as most want to pass their assets to children and grandchildren. But I would encourage anyone to at least consider leaving a small amount or percentage of their assets to worthwhile organizations. Support what you love in your life and make sure it prospers when you're gone. I have found that the more you give, the more you receive back. It's a karma legacy."—*Jessica Lindenfelser*

*To learn more about how you can include AWF in your estate plans, please call +1 202 939 3333 or visit [awf.org/legacy](http://awf.org/legacy)*

Billy and Cheryl Geffon are gratified that their decision to commit a percentage of their estate to AWF will mean rhinos, elephants, gorillas and other wildlife will prosper long after they are gone.



With AWF funding support, the Ruaha Carnivore Project is ensuring that people derive benefit from living alongside cheetah, wild dog and other carnivores.

# Carnivores as an *Advantage*

Nat Geo Wild/Wild to Inspire/Filip DeArmad

*Your support is showing villagers near Tanzania's Ruaha National Park that living alongside lions has benefits—not just costs*

**T**hough they live next to Tanzania's largest national park, residents in the villages surrounding Ruaha National Park see no benefits from the presence of wildlife, particularly carnivores. And there are plenty of carnivores here: The area supports a tenth of the world's remaining lions, one of East Africa's four large cheetah populations and one of only six remaining viable populations of the African wild dog.

With people living in such close proximity to wildlife, livestock depredation is a regular phenomenon. So are retaliatory killings of carnivores, particularly lions. In 2011 – 2012, the rate of lion killing in this area was the highest in all of East Africa. One village reportedly killed 39 lions in 18 months.

The situation was dire for carnivores and humans alike. "We needed to create tangible benefits from carnivore presence and enhance appreciation of wildlife," says Amy Dickman. Dickman's Ruaha Carnivore Project (RCP) has found some innovative ways to do just that, and AWF is proudly supporting its work through our Urgent Response Fund.

## DVD nights

One of RCP's methods is its popular DVD nights. In 2015, RCP provided eight camera traps to each of four villages surrounding the national park. Each village placed its camera traps in locations residents determined would garner the most wildlife—particularly carnivore—photos.

At the end of each month, RCP gathers with each village for a DVD night to present the images captured on the camera traps and discuss the ecological benefits of wildlife. Each image garners a certain number of points based on the type and number of species captured. (Extra points are rewarded for carnivore photos.) At the end of three months, the village with the greatest

number of points "wins," earning benefits that residents determine they most want for their community. The other villages still receive prizes—such as schoolbooks, health supplies or veterinary medicine—according to their rank. The competition begins anew at the end of each three-month period.

The monthly DVD nights are a hit with villagers. By the end of May 2015, more than 20,000 locals had attended the DVD nights. "The local people are very excited about having control of the wildlife monitoring and seeing how the camera-trap images translate into points, and then into benefits," Dickman reports, adding that all residents who saw the images wanted to learn more about the specific species that lived on their village land.

## Changing attitudes

Together with other interventions—including the provision of predator-proof livestock enclosures, field trips into the national park for residents and secondary school scholarships for promising students—RCP is slowly changing attitudes toward carnivores.

Take what occurred in September. After a lion hunt in which warriors from the local Barabaig tribe killed two lion cubs, RCP gathered with the village to discuss what happened. "After much discussion about the benefits that the village receives from RCP, the village elders unanimously agreed that lion hunting could not continue and that future hunts must be stopped," RCP reports. The village even went so far as to fine the leaders of the hunt.

"This is a very unusual and promising development," Dickman explains. "Traditionally, young men have been rewarded for going on lion hunts. The fact that the community leaders themselves decided to take this action demonstrates how much the community's attitude toward large carnivores has changed since RCP first began its conservation efforts." ■

# wildlife WATCH *Okapi*

**T**rying to describe the okapi sounds a bit like you're telling one of those riddles from childhood: What looks like a large antelope, acts like a spy, has white stripes, and is reddish-brown all over?

And indeed, the okapi's appearance is a bit of a puzzle. It measures up to 6 ft. tall and weighs as much as 700 lbs. It has a reddish-brown body, an elongated neck—and white, zebra-like stripes along its hindquarters and the top of its legs.

Back in the early 1900s, the biggest riddle about the okapi was its taxonomical status. The animal was eventually determined to belong to the *Giraffidae* family. It is now said to be one of the last remaining ancestors of the giraffe and is even colloquially called the forest giraffe. Upon closer examination, the okapi does bear some similarities to its longer-necked relative: The male okapi sports small hair-covered horns on its head, like giraffes of both sexes. Like the giraffe, the okapi is equipped with a long, black tongue to

forage for leaves and other plant matter. Though its neck is much shorter, the okapi nevertheless has seven cervical vertebrae like its cousin. Finally, the okapi mirrors the giraffe's "pacing" gait when it walks: It moves the front and hind legs on one side of the body at the same time, rather than alternating legs from either side like other ungulates.

The okapi uses this pacing gait during the day, as it roams through the forest in search of food. It tends to be shy and solitary, behavior that is aided by its habitat: the dense, forested Congo Basin habitats of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Today, the okapi's habitat is disappearing due to deforestation. This is a major reason why the species is considered endangered, with only about 10,000 to 35,000 individuals remaining in the wild.



Martin Harvey

## in the MEDIA

AWF has been garnering increased coverage in the media, on a range of conservation issues. Check out the following media mentions:

- During a trip to Beijing, China, AWF CEO Patrick Bergin sat down with a *New York Times* reporter to talk about China's role in African development. The discussion was captured in the ***New York Times Sinosphere blog***. [Bit.ly/ChinainAfrica](http://Bit.ly/ChinainAfrica)
- AWF's anti-trafficking work with Kenya Wildlife Service (via our Conservation Canine Programme) took center stage in a televised news story that ran on multiple outlets, including ***U.S. News & World Report online***. [Bit.ly/caninecops](http://Bit.ly/caninecops)
- As part of World Wildlife Day celebrations on March 3, an OpEd by AWF President Kaddu Sebunya appeared on the ***World Economic Forum website***, encouraging Africans to take more ownership of conservation matters. [Bit.ly/WEF-ownership](http://Bit.ly/WEF-ownership)

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## what's new ONLINE

### AWF impact

What a year 2015 has been! With your support, we successfully protected 24 wildlife corridors; contributed US\$5 million in direct financial benefits to communities living in key wildlife areas; and protected 36 critical populations of elephants, rhinos, carnivores and great apes through our Urgent Response Fund. Explore our new 2015 annual report to see how else your support has helped. The online interactive edition highlights the successes and challenges of the past year—and gives you a glimpse of what's to come.

**Check out the report:** [awf.org/2015AR](http://awf.org/2015AR)

### WEB



### YOUTUBE

## Yes, girls can be scientists, too

In December 2015, AWF, Nat Geo WILD and the Sun Valley Film Festival sent the winner of our WILD to INSPIRE film competition, filmmaker Filipe DeAndrade, to Africa to visually document the conservation experience. While there, DeAndrade captured that and so much more.

Inspired by a girl's tweet that asked, "Can girls be scientists?," DeAndrade made a short

film featuring the work of female wildlife researchers and conservationists. His definitively titled "Girls Can Be Scientists" film includes an interview with AWF's own Fiesta Warinwa, country director for Kenya. The film, which premiered at the 2016 Sun Valley Film Festival in March, moved some audience members to tears.

**See the film:** [awf.org/girls-scientists](http://awf.org/girls-scientists)