

African Wildlife News

SPRING 2013

Billy Dodson

1961–2013

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

Inside THIS ISSUE



page 3

Maasai warriors take part in their own Olympics to support conservation.



page 6

AWF launches the all-new African Apes Initiative to help great apes across the continent.



page 8

More species, cool facts, and interactive features make the redesigned AWF.org an online destination.



Rubyn Gianni

Increasing numbers of African wildlife are being poached, part of an illegal wildlife trafficking crisis plaguing the continent. According to the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group, the rate of rhino poaching in 2012 represented a loss of almost 3 percent of the population.

A Grave and Growing Threat

The poaching of Africa's rhinos and elephants feeds a US\$10 billion illicit industry, with widespread negative ramifications

If 2011 was bad for African wildlife in terms of poaching, then 2012 was catastrophic. Rhinos and elephants in particular were targeted last year, with the worst incidents involving shockingly large numbers of wildlife being killed—such as when *Janjaweed* from Sudan, gunmen on horseback and one of the main players in the Darfur conflict, slaughtered between 300 and 400 elephants in Cameroon's Boubou N'djida National Park in early 2012. By year's end, South Africa had lost 668 rhinos to poaching, a 50 percent increase over 2011. Africa's elephant poaching numbers were higher still: A report submitted to the Tanzanian Parliament, for example, was said to have estimated the country's elephant poaching rate at 30 per day.

Together, these and other incidents underscore a grave and growing threat that governments across Africa are now scrambling to combat. "The dictionary defines 'poaching' as the illegal taking of game or fish. What is happening across Africa is not simply poaching. There is a widespread trend of illegal wildlife trafficking—harvesting, practically—that, if not stemmed, could result in the extinction of some of Africa's most celebrated fauna," declares AWF CEO Patrick Bergin.

(continued on page 4)



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Embracing Challenges, Creating Opportunities



John Butler

After more than two decades at African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), you might ask how I keep fighting on for conservation in Africa. Balancing the needs of people and nature is a challenge anywhere, but couple these general conservation issues with the dynamic, rapidly changing continent of Africa, and our organization is in the interesting position of confronting new and seemingly outsized challenges all the time.

It can definitely feel like an uphill battle. As our cover story details, illegal wildlife trafficking is targeting wildlife across the continent, from celebrated megafauna like elephants and rhinos down to less well-known species such as the pangolin. Habitat destruction, due in large part to increased infrastructure development, is threatening not only Africa's forests but also populations of great apes—from gorillas to bonobos to chimpanzees—who depend on them. Climate change continues to alter weather patterns across the continent and have unanticipated impacts on our priority landscapes.

These challenges also present great opportunities, however. With your help, AWF can engage more meaningfully with partners already taking positive action on the ground, for example. That is the strategy behind our new African Apes Initiative, which aims to conserve the biodiverse havens of Central and West Africa's forests (see p. 6). We're also leveraging partnerships to restore the Mau Forest Complex (see opposite).

Additionally, we've recognized opportunities for us to tell our story in new, more compelling, and more effective ways. As of April, I'm proud to direct you to our newly redesigned website at awf.org! I encourage you to visit and explore the refreshed site. You'll find it to be fresh, engaging, and constantly changing—just like Africa.

For us to continue taking advantage of these opportunities and to reach conservation milestones in Africa, however, AWF needs your continued support. One of the most lasting ways to do this is to leave a legacy gift for AWF, which you can learn more about on p. 7. By naming AWF in your will or making a bequest through your estate, for example, you will ensure that Africa's wildlife and wild lands endure beyond our lifetimes. I myself am a Kilimanjaro Society Member, and I highly encourage you to do the same. It's definitely an opportunity of a lifetime.

**With your help,
AWF can engage
more meaningfully
with partners
already taking action
on the ground**

Patrick Bergin, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. If you haven't already, check out the new 2012 annual report that details all the different ways in which your support has helped conserve Africa's wildlife and wild lands. Visit awf.org/annualreport





Photo Courtesy of TV Land

Thanks from AWF (and Betty White)

Last December, actress Betty White agreed to match every dollar AWF supporters gave to help us protect rhinos, elephants, and other endangered wildlife from the current poaching crisis. We're delighted to report that with generous support from members like you, Betty was able to meet her \$25,000 goal! That's a total of \$50,000 in resources toward anti-poaching efforts! With these funds, AWF can recruit more local scouts to provide security for endangered wildlife, train sniffer dogs that detect contraband rhino horn and ivory at ports in Africa, and partner with other NGOs to send a message that it's unacceptable to kill endangered species. Thanks again—we couldn't have done it without you! ■

AWF ROUND-UP



Maasailand Preservation Trust/Big Life Foundation

Warrior athletes turn to conservation

When the *menye layiok*, Maasai cultural leaders, decided to make killing lions taboo in 2008, they needed a replacement for the 500-year-old warrior tradition of hunting lions to win the community's respect. With support from AWF and other organizations, the *menye layiok* held the first-ever Maasai Olympics in Kenya in December. Representing four warrior villages, 100 athletes from the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem competed in five track and field events based on traditional Maasai warrior skills like running, hunting, herding, and even dancing.

Along with prestige, winners earned opportunities lion hunting does not offer: a free trip to run in the 2013 New York Marathon, a university scholarship, medals, cash prizes, and a conservation prize for the village doing the most to protect lions. The grand prize, a breeding bull, is an important economic asset for the pastoral Maasai. ■

Stamp of support for species



For those of you showing your support for species conservation through your mail: Thank you! Since September 2011, the U.S. Postal Service has been selling the "Save Vanishing Species" stamp. Ten cents from every one of these stamps sold goes to the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, a federal program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that invests in species conservation around the world—including rhinos, elephants, and great apes. (AWF has previously been a beneficiary of these grants.) An astounding 18.1 million stamps were sold between September 2011 and December 2012, raising nearly US\$1.9 billion for the five species conservation funds. ■

More trees for the Mau



Peter Othira

Last year, AWF signed an agreement with Tricorona, a Swedish company focused on carbon emission reduction projects, where Tricorona clients would be able to purchase a tree for AWF to plant in the Mau Forest Complex in Kenya. As of January, 857 trees have been sponsored through the partnership; AWF will soon plant and protect these trees for one year as part of the agreement. AWF is continuing to pursue partnerships with private firms to assist with Mau restoration efforts. ■

A Grave and Growing Threat *(Cont'd from cover)*



Billy Dodson

Ivory from elephants continues to be in high demand on the black market. In February, Gabon announced that poachers had killed more than 11,000 of its elephants—up to 77 percent of its population—since 2007. The following month, 89 elephants—including 33 pregnant females and 15 calves—were poached in less than one week in Chad.

Multibillion-dollar industry

According to a 2012 report from wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC, the illegal wildlife trade is estimated to be as large as US\$10 billion a year. Among illicit industries, it's smaller only than drugs, counterfeiting, and human trafficking. The trafficking of wildlife parts is considered a low-risk, high-reward racket where ivory and rhino horn command top dollar in Asia and around the world—anywhere from a thousand to tens of thousands of U.S. dollars per kg—and the few poachers who are caught often get off with limited jail time or a paltry fine. (A South African court did sentence the kingpin of a rhino horn smuggling syndicate to a 40-year prison term, but such sentences still appear to be the exception rather than the norm.)

Moreover, the business of illegal wildlife trafficking is a global one, involving heavily financed, highly sophisticated criminal syndicates. “Wildlife might be targeted and killed across Asia and Africa, but their furs, tusks, bones, and horns are sold all over the

world,” noted then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last November when she announced the United States would add stopping illegal wildlife trafficking to its foreign policy agenda. “Smuggled goods from poached animals find their way to Europe, Australia, China, and the United States.” The United States is said to be one of the largest destination markets for illegally trafficked wildlife in the world.

Implications of a single incident

The illegal wildlife trade has the potential to cripple not only Africa's wildlife populations but also jeopardize national security, destabilize economies, and ruin the biodiversity and ecosystems of countless countries.

Rhinos and elephants, after all, are being poached by individuals armed with the likes of AK-47s, night-vision goggles, and powerful veterinary drugs, and who may even be ferried to and from sites in helicopters. These are not the acts of locals carrying out retaliatory killings in response to human-wildlife conflict,

but of individuals—whether local or not—being paid by criminal enterprises to kill both wildlife and any wildlife rangers who get in the way, and to help smuggle contraband out of the country and off the continent. In other cases, rebel groups are funding militant activities through the illegal wildlife trade.

Either way, these acts have widespread ramifications. Take the Bouba N'djida example. This incident meant:

- The loss of hundreds of elephants;
- The compromised safety of citizens of three countries as the armed men crossed from Sudan, through Chad, and into northern Cameroon to conduct the poachings;
- The risk to the lives of wildlife rangers stationed in Bouba N'djida and of Cameroonian troops later sent to the park (at least one soldier was killed during a battle between the Janjaweed and the army);
- Increased security issues and conflict in Darfur, Sudan, given the likelihood of the Janjaweed using ivory sales to purchase more weapons;
- The redistribution of government resources in Cameroon to address the incident—and the siphoning away of these resources from other potentially critical areas;
- The loss of potential future tourism income in Cameroon;
- The loss of potential tax earnings or visa entry permit fees for the governments of Sudan, Chad, and Cameroon;
- The potential destabilization of Asian economies from increased activity in the ivory black market; and
- Long-term biodiversity effects in northern Cameroon, given elephants' roles as megaherbivores that help disperse seeds and create trails for smaller fauna.

Multiply such effects by countless poaching incidents of countless wildlife in countless African nations, and the implications are staggering.

The role of CITES

How, then, can we stop illegal wildlife trafficking? Just as arresting the small-time dealer on the street corner does little to hamper the overall drug trade in the Americas, neither will catching a handful of poachers on the ground be enough to stop this industry. A global effort is necessary. The efforts of a single NGO such as AWF, which is doing its own part to try to ensure security on the ground in several African countries and educate consumers in Asia about the consequences of their ivory and rhino horn demand (see "Rhinos in Peril" supplement to *African Wildlife News*, Fall 2012), is simply not enough.

There have been some promising developments in the past year. Certainly, having the weight of the U.S. government behind the war against illegal wildlife trafficking helps. Botswana and Zambia also announced they will be instituting bans on trophy hunting to stem declining wildlife numbers. Although this will mean losing

money in permit revenue, the long-term impact of not halting such activities was obviously clear to these governments.

And then there is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Better known by its acronym, CITES (pronounced SY-teez), the international body tasked with overseeing the trade in endangered wildlife and plants meets every three years to discuss new proposals related to species sales and management. CITES' 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) took place March 3 – 15 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Critics note that CITES lacks enforcement power and further that only those nations that are signatories need to follow its trade regulations. Even so, "there are 178 countries signed on to the treaty, and CITES protects roughly 5,000 species of animals

and 29,000 species of plants," observes Philip Muruthi, senior director of conservation science at AWF. "CITES cannot be the only way to prevent illegal trafficking of endangered wildlife species, but it is a start."

Indeed, this year's gathering provided an ideal opening to start a global discussion on this critical issue. International public pressure ahead of the conference, for example, prompted host country Thailand to announce it would end its own legalized ivory trade. The conference parties additionally put the "gang of eight" countries most heavily implicated in the illegal rhino horn and ivory trade on probation, requiring them to increase enforcement by July 2014 or face sanctions. The eight countries under scrutiny are Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda on the source side, and China, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam on the demand side.

Can these initiatives stop illegal wildlife trafficking before it's too late? Only time will tell, although positive action can't come soon enough. In March, 89 elephants—including 33 pregnant females and 15 calves—were killed for their ivory in Chad, all in a single week. The Janjaweed involved in the 2012 Bouba N'djida incident were implicated in the crime. ■

"There is a widespread trend of illegal wildlife trafficking that, if not stemmed, could result in the extinction of some of Africa's most celebrated fauna."

—Patrick Bergin, AWF CEO



As of April 25, 249 rhinos have been poached in 2013, just in South Africa.

Africa's Apes in Decline

For Africa's great ape species—all of which are endangered or critically endangered—AWF's new program comes just in time

Africa's great apes are in decline. From poaching to habitat destruction to the risk of disease from humans, the list of threats to great ape survival is long and getting longer.

"We are facing rapid changes throughout Africa," says AWF Great Apes Program Director Jef Dupain. "Human population growth is massive. The continent is experiencing major infrastructure development. And there is an incredible international interest in agroindustry and soil exploitation. These factors will profoundly impact habitat destruction and increase the risk of disease transmission and poaching from larger settlements invading the forest."

Most dangerous threat

Africa is home to four of the world's five great apes: the bonobo, chimpanzee, eastern gorilla (of which the mountain gorilla is a subspecies), and western gorilla. All four are either endangered or critically endangered. Sources estimate there are about 25,000 to 50,000 bonobos; approximately 400,000 chimpanzees; 3,000 to 10,000 eastern gorillas; and up to 150,000 western gorillas living in Africa.

In comparison, the human population in sub-Saharan Africa has risen exponentially, reportedly passing the 1 billion mark a couple of years ago. It's a huge issue, for the great ape's most dangerous threat is humans. To start, poaching—even at relatively low levels—has devastating impacts due to apes' slow reproduction rates. Apes are also vulnerable to human diseases, which have reportedly decimated ape populations across equatorial Africa.

Meanwhile, a study published last year in the journal, "Diversity and Distributions," found that the total "suitable environmental conditions" for African apes—i.e., total great ape habitat—declined by 208,000 sq. km between the 1990s and 2000s. That's more than 51 million acres, roughly the equivalent of four soccer fields every day over 20 years.



David Thomson

AWF is launching an African Apes Initiative to protect targeted great ape habitats, including those of chimpanzees (such as above), in West and Central Africa.

Leveraging knowledge gained from its decades-long mountain gorilla and bonobo conservation work, AWF is now tackling these challenges as they relate to Africa's other great ape populations. AWF's new African Apes Initiative will identify critical great ape habitats and work to conserve their ecosystems. As a collaborating force, AWF will bring together stakeholders—including researchers, wildlife authorities, and local communities—to work toward ensuring the future of key great ape populations.

AWF has already identified initial sites under the initiative, and work will begin in the coming months. Given the rapid infrastructure changes and population boom across the continent, the time to act is clearly now. ■

Mountain Gorillas on the Rise



Stephen Hamm

The results from the 2011 mountain gorilla census of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in the Virunga Heartland are in, showing an increase in the population from 302 in 2006 to 400 in 2011. This again raises the world mountain gorilla population estimate, to 880! This remarkable increase reflects both improved censusing techniques and real population growth. (For more information, see "Counting on Conservation," *African Wildlife News*, Winter 2012.)

AWF supports gorilla monitoring and conservation through the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP), a coalition of AWF, Fauna & Flora International, and WWF. The census was led by the Uganda Wildlife Authority, with support from the Democratic Republic of Congo's Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), the Rwanda Development Board, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, IGCP, and other partners. ■

The 2011 census of the mountain gorillas living in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park found a significant increase in the population, putting the world mountain gorilla population estimate at 880.

From the Canadian Wilds to the African Bush

From Canada's westernmost province, an AWF supporter leaves legacy to protect Africa's wild lands

By Kathleen Garrigan

Murray Robinson, 62, first developed an interest in the outdoors growing up in Victoria, British Columbia. In spite of—or perhaps because of—the wild splendor that British Columbia had to offer, Robinson was drawn to the East African bush he saw featured on TV programs. Fourteen years ago, he finally saw the wildlife and wild landscapes of East Africa for himself.

“Despite the significant difference in culture and topography from Canada, I remember feeling almost at home,” recalls Robinson, who visited Kenya and Tanzania. “I had the opportunity to see an enormous amount of wildlife in just a few weeks.”

At first sight

Just as Robinson fell in love with East Africa the first time he saw it on TV, he had a similar reaction the first time he met the woman who was to be his wife.

“It was one of those love-at-first-sight situations and as I had never been married, it was that much more extraordinary,” says Robinson, who, at the age of 55, met and married his wife in the space of a couple of months. “My wife, Debra, was an amazing woman who had a successful law practice in Vancouver. She was awarded her Queen’s Counsel in 2005 and was heavily involved in charitable work.”

Their time together would be cut short, however. After only two years of marriage, Debra passed away from lung cancer. In spite of her illness, Robinson and his wife traveled to Africa together for what would be the first—and last—time.

“She was a city girl but because of my interest in Africa, she made it her last mission before she died to see what it was all about,” remembers Robinson.

A love turned legacy

Before her passing, Robinson and his wife began to look at supporting conservation work through their estates. It was in 2007 that they learned of AWF’s work.

Robinson agrees with AWF’s approach of conserving large landscapes for the benefit of wildlife and people. “We hear a lot about elephants, lions, and rhinos, but it’s entire ecosystems that are being damaged, and with it, animals and plants up and down the food chain,” he says.

In 2012, Robinson set up an endowment to support AWF’s land and habitat conservation work through a bequest in his estate. “Protecting wild places and the animals is a complicated business. I would like to think that by establishing an endowment whereby the proceeds would fund a variety of interconnected activities—like research, land acquisition, restoration work, education, and anti-poaching support—this can make a difference in preserving wild places and wildlife.”

It seems love at first sight can lead to happy memories and long legacies. ■



Murray Robinson (right) became a legacy donor in 2012 after learning about AWF’s focus on large-landscape conservation and local community engagement.



Robinson’s late wife, Debra Van Ginkel, made it her mission to travel to Africa with him before she passed away.

MAKE AFRICA YOUR HEIR!

You, too, can leave a legacy, or planned, gift like Murray Robinson. Legacy gifts are deferred gifts of cash, equity, or property, often made through a supporter’s estate. Examples include making a specific or residual bequest in a will or trust, or designating AWF a beneficiary of your life insurance policy or retirement plan. Legacy gifts are easy to set up and almost anyone can make them. Get in touch with AWF’s legacy giving officer today!



To learn more about legacy giving options, call +1 202 939 3333 or visit awf.org/legacy

Introducing the New AWF.org



After 6 years, AWF has redesigned its website, providing users more easily digestible wildlife information and an unprecedented experience across devices

By Gayane Margaryan

After months of careful planning and hard work, AWF has launched an all-new version of its website, AWF.org. There has been much change in the online world since the last iteration of AWF.org in 2007. Studies show that people are spending increasing amounts of time online. Time spent on PCs and smartphones was up 21 percent from July 2011 to July 2012, according to Nielsen. Social media use grows daily, and social networks have evolved to become more than just venues for news information and status updates. More than ever, users want to connect on personal levels and interact, not just with friends and acquaintances, but also with causes and brands. AWF launched the newly redesigned AWF.org this April to stay current with these changing information trends and better serve our supporters.

The new website will provide users with a more personal, shareable experience. We know our supporters enjoy wildlife images and information—so content will have social media buttons that lets users share their favorite animal photos and facts, as well as the issues they care about, like illegal wildlife trafficking.

Information is also organized in an easier-to-digest format. No more wading through paragraphs upon paragraphs of dry copy—visitors will find interesting tidbits at a glance, such as that the gerenuk eats standing on two legs, that the cheetah counts the lion and the hyena—not to mention the eagle—as its predators, or that the bush baby has 18 distinct vocalizations.

Ultimately, the newly redesigned website lets users control their AWF.org experience and get as much, or as little, information as they want on a variety of topics. Our wildlife gallery, for example, allows visitors to sort species based on size—small, medium or large—or endangerment status, among other factors. Similarly, readers can determine what kind of Africa they want to experience through the website: one that's thriving, wild, or under threat, for example. These fun, interactive filters will then bring in new multilingual content, stunning video, and beautiful photographs that will transport visitors straight to Africa's landscapes and provide detailed information about AWF's impact in those regions.

Seamless user experience

By 2016, there will be 10 billion mobile Internet devices used globally. A lot of this use is expected to come from outside of the United States—including Africa.

“Users are now connected wherever they go, and especially in Africa, most people are connected via mobile,” said David Onate, AWF’s online communications and marketing manager, who oversaw the day-to-day details of the website redesign project. “The user experience is really important, so we designed AWF.org to dynamically serve up content, seamlessly and across devices.”

We invite you to travel with us—virtually—to Africa and to experience the wildlife, landscapes, and ultimately, the continent you love, in a way you’ve never seen it before. Grab your nearest device and start exploring! ■



To explore AWF's newly redesigned website, visit awf.org