



## Protecting “the forgotten ape”

**W**ildlife enthusiasts generally know a lot about our closest cousins in the natural world, chimpanzees. But often they know less about a primate that is equally close and just as fascinating — the bonobo (*Pan paniscus*).

Like chimpanzees, bonobos share more than 98 percent of DNA with humans. But bonobos, though sometimes violent, are more peaceable. They live in matriarchal groups and famously use sex as a social tool — to manage conflict and tension or even just say “hello.” This behavior aligns bonobos with humans, who also notably have sex for reasons besides reproduction — emotional bonding, for example. Because of bonobos mellow ways, some call these

great apes “hippie chimps” — the primates that make love, not war.

What about physical differences between bonobos and chimps? To an untrained eye, it can be hard to distinguish them. But there are differences — bonobos are slender, with longer legs. Their faces are usually black, and their lips are bright pink as opposed to dark. Their hair is relatively long and often frames their faces from a natural middle part. They're also distinguished by tail tufts.

Bonobos' vocalizations are higher-pitched — “peeps,” and “peep yelps.” You can hear these vocalizations and a breathy laugh when bonobos are on the receiving end of a tickle. Bonobos *really* like to play, even as

adults — so much, that some researchers think the bonobo is the most playful species of all.

In recent decades, bonobos have shed new light on human evolution and the cognitive capacities of nonhuman animals. In studies they demonstrate cooperation, sharing fruit treats and helping other bonobos — even strangers — access treats for no apparent reason other than helpfulness. Such findings help fill in our picture of wild animal capacities and teach us about ourselves, since we share an evolutionary ancestor with bonobos.

Bonobos are unique, yet still “the forgotten ape.” Why are these gregarious, helpful primates lesser known than chimps,



**AFRICAN WILDLIFE  
FOUNDATION**

Our mission is to ensure wildlife and wild lands thrive in modern Africa.

**AWF Senior Staff**

**Dr. Tom Ogilvie-Graham**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

**Kaddu Sebunya**  
*President*

**Jeff Chrisfield**  
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**Craig Sholley**  
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**Jef Dupain**  
*VP for Programs, Central & West Africa*

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**Editorial Staff**

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**Megan Berman**  
*Print Marketing Associate*

**Denis Kimathi**  
*Graphic & Multimedia Design Officer*

**KENYA - HEADQUARTERS**

Ngong Road, Karen  
P.O. Box 310, 00502  
Nairobi  
Phone +254 (0) 711 063000  
Fax +254 20 2765030

**UNITED STATES**

1100 New Jersey Avenue SE, Ste. 900  
Washington, DC 20003  
Toll Free +1 888 494 5354  
Phone +1 202 939 3333  
Fax +1 202 939 3332

**UNITED KINGDOM**

P.O. Box 74158  
London SE24 4BT  
Phone +44 7981 183 103

[africanwildlife@awf.org](mailto:africanwildlife@awf.org)

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# Hitting the ground running



**D**ear friends of African wildlife, I could not have wished for a more useful and insightful start to my time with AWF. Just days after starting in January, I travelled to see the mountain gorillas in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park, who have had their range increased thanks to a gift of land from AWF to the Rwandan government. It is the first park expansion in more than 30 years and will help protect the endangered — but slowly and steadily growing — mountain gorilla population.

I followed that highly significant day with two visits to the Maasai Mara, where AWF may strengthen its involvement in community-driven habitat conservation initiatives. I also spent two weeks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo reviewing our USAID- and EU-sponsored programs, which integrate biodiversity protection with support for sustainable local livelihoods.

A hop across the continent and the ocean and I spent another two weeks in our DC office, visiting trustees, donors, supporters and partners in the capital as well as traveling to California and Florida. I also squeezed into this two-month period visits to the UK (AWF's UK office, UK government agencies), various UN agencies and Burundi. The travelling around allowed me to meet many staff members and partners as well as to gain a rapid but comprehensive overview of AWF's operations and programs. This should be very helpful as I work with staff members and trustees to develop AWF's next five-year strategic plan.

Challenges that bear upon wildlife and wild lands in Africa have never been greater. No other organization can play a more significant part in addressing this than AWF. From influencing governments and public opinion, as with our significant contribution toward the recently implemented ivory ban in China, to working with national governments on reduction in wildlife trafficking, to our direct support for endangered species in programs that spread right across sub-Saharan Africa, we make an enormous and sustained contribution. For me, as for AWF, the word "conservation" also means development, and we fully recognize that conservation is in fact principally about people and that by helping people we can provide the best and most sustainable protection for the animals we value so much.

Given the critical importance of AWF's mission to ensure a thriving future for wildlife and wild lands in modern Africa, there is much to do, but I know I could not wish for greater supporters and shall rely on your continued support throughout all the challenges ahead!

With best wishes,

Dr. Tom Ogilvie-Graham  
*Chief Executive Officer*



# AWF Roundup



## The sad loss of the world's last male northern white rhino

People around the world have expressed their grief at the loss of the world's last male northern white rhino. After months of age-related health complications, Sudan the rhino deteriorated so badly he could no longer even stand up. Sudan died in March at his home, the AWF-supported Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya. Millions of people commented on social media, apologizing to Sudan for the crime of poaching and speaking about their sadness and love for the old male.

Sudan had lived under armed guard as a protection against poachers. He left behind his daughter, Najin, and her daughter, Fatu, the last two female northern white rhinos. There is a slim hope for the subspecies' continuation through development of in vitro fertilization techniques using eggs from Najin and Fatu, stored northern white rhino semen and surrogate southern white rhino females.

Thanks to support from committed donors like you, AWF directly protects rhinos at 11 sites through wildlife law enforcement and population monitoring as well as ranger support, including training and provision of needed housing and equipment. At all sites where AWF works, the rhino populations are stable or increasing.



## World Wildlife Day

People who care about African wildlife boosted the cause on March 3, the fifth-ever World Wildlife Day. This year, organizers used the special day to highlight threats facing big cats and to promote big cat conservation. AWF's community stepped up, with thousands spreading the word on Facebook and Twitter about our work on behalf of lions, leopards and cheetahs.

**250%** INCREASE IN FARMER INCOMES THANKS TO AWF'S CONGO SHIPPING PROJECT, WHICH USES A TUG-BARGE TO CONNECT REMOTE FARM VILLAGES TO NEW MARKETS.

*Improved incomes reduce reliance on illegal bushmeat hunting and slash-and-burn agriculture, and thus help protect endangered bonobos and other wildlife.*

## UK ivory ban: a big win

In what is hopefully the start of a trend, the UK showed its commitment to elephants this year with one of the world's toughest ivory bans. The country's April 3 announcement followed a period of public comment in which 70,000 people, or 88 percent of those weighing in, called for a ban.

A ban on ivory trade across international borders has been effective since 1990, but many countries allow domestic trade. Research has shown that European countries, including the UK, are the largest exporters of legal ivory, often to Asian countries. The problem is that the legal trade not only stimulates demand, it can provide cover for illegal ivory.

What other countries have domestic ivory bans? To date, the US, China, Hong Kong (ban not yet implemented) and Taiwan. But the hope is for new bans in Europe and Asia, and that 2018 will shape up to be a turning point in the fight against ivory trade.



# Meet African wildlife's advocate on Capitol Hill

*As director of program design and partner relations, Dr. Jimmiel Mandima develops and manages relationships with the agencies that fund about 30 percent of AWF's work.*

## You joined AWF as a projects officer for the first two years. Can you talk about the value of field experience?

I believe that this is where the rubber meets the road. Being able to be in the field in our kind of jobs — in terms of engaging U.S. government partners and communicating about our programs — allows me to intimately articulate the reality of what is happening now. Secondly it gives me a one-on-one with technical colleagues who are implementing programs every day, so I learn a lot; and likewise, I also get to throw in my own knowledge. It is a two-way enrichment.

## Can you talk about your role here at AWF?

First and foremost, my role is to manage our U.S. government portfolio, to speak about what we do in Africa, and hopefully that influences or informs strategic thinking. It requires talking across the entire portfolio. The key agencies are USAID, the Department of the Interior, with a focus on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and now, more and more, the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Overall, I particularly engage the key players leading the government's interagency efforts to combat wildlife trafficking.

## What do you glean from between the lines or even what people tell you directly is AWF's reputation as a conservation organization and how effective it is?

AWF is highly regarded. In fact, it is seen as the only credible voice — I can arguably say that — to articulate the African context. Because we also do actually more multi-year, field-

based work, we have clout. Most government agencies co-design strategies on a regular basis to inform U.S. government support to conservation in Africa, and they are keen to listen to the authentic African voice that AWF offers.

## Can you talk about some of the differences you observe in working on conservation in the U.S. versus in Africa?

The value of conservation in Africa transcends into livelihoods. It is about putting food on the table. A key question asked by an ordinary villager is "What does it mean for me?" And often when we think communities do not get it and they keep doing so-called "illegal things" — it is because they have got to put food on the table.

In contrast, on this side, people are very passionate. But, they do not put that same passion into engaging with local communities to appreciate the context — to the point of assuming that the people are backward or do not get it. I say to people, "Remember, people there have always co-existed intimately with nature. They get medicine there. They get firewood there. Why would they want to finish their forest and end up with no firewood? But what options are there?"

## Can you talk about top goals and challenges for your program?

My first goal is very basic: to get the current administration to maintain the U.S. government leadership on issues to do with biodiversity conservation. The second is to see how much we



Rachel Kramer

can mobilize the corporate world to recognize that the sustenance of their businesses is reliant on functional ecosystems, which means wildlife and wild lands. I think the corporate world should invest commensurate with what they get out of the continent. The challenges stem from the current administration seeming to toe a line of trivializing a lot of the U.S. biodiversity issues on the global scale, starting with climate change, while also pushing to shrink the conservation budget.

## What is one thing you want people to know about AWF that they may not know?

I think AWF genuinely looks at how wildlife and wild lands should be tangible contributors to human well-being in Africa. It is about conservation actually contributing to the quality of life, to

the development and economic growth of Africa.

The other is African ownership — that Africans should take leadership. I think that's unique. The AWF team is more than 85 percent African. That we established headquarters in Kenya is a very clear statement of AWF's priorities and vision, one that I believe is unique to us.

## Isn't African ownership the only pragmatic solution? What else will work?

Nothing. The thing is, we have to prioritize community engagement. You can put money into putting fences up. If you do not engage locals, they look at you and say, "Your money will get finished. We will cut the fences anyway if we want to." And they will do it. They get arrested; they probably have no money to pay the fine anyway, or they get free food in the jail. So, it is about that — that is what distinguishes AWF. We look at African ownership at all levels. Staff, community engagement, and partnerships on the ground.

## What gives you hope?

I am optimistic firstly because of the difference I see AWF making. We have tested our landscape-level conservation approach and we know it works — we know success requires cross-jurisdictional collaboration and coordination of entities such as wildlife authorities. We are scaling up, and our approaches are being used by other organizations.

Secondly, over the last few years I have seen wildlife and conservation champions emerging on the African continent, in national governments, regional economic organizations, and all the way to the African Union. With that kind of policy, governance-level buy-in, we then have a platform to say, "Based on your aspirations, we are now doing this." So that gives me tremendous hope.

Finally, combating wildlife trafficking is now a global movement. It never used to be. Now we are all united — there is a critical mass.

gorillas and orangutans? Perhaps mainly because they live only in one place, and it's a remote place — deep in the rainforest of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

### 'In serious trouble'

Their forest habitat spans about 193,000 square miles and is demarcated by three rivers, the Congo, Kasai and Lualaba. Throughout their range, bonobos are increasingly at risk from human beings, who've killed them off to the point of endangerment. Today there are an estimated 15,000-20,000 wild bonobos remaining.

Struggling to survive, people who live in the Congo Basin slash and burn forest for conversion to agriculture, destroying and fragmenting bonobo habitat. This fragmentation heightens bonobos' vulnerability to hunters and also isolates bonobo groups that must interbreed to remain viable.

For a long time, local taboos against hunting bonobos, who are so human-like, protected the peaceable apes. But those mores are dropping off under the influence of cultural outsiders and with tradition's weakening hold on the young. Today, commercial bushmeat hunting, supported by ever more trade routes, joins habitat loss as a top threat to bonobos. Some researchers estimate that tons of bushmeat are extracted daily in bonobo range areas. The number

of bonobos killed for bushmeat is limited compared to other species, but because bonobos reproduce slowly, bushmeat hunting poses a dire threat.

"Bonobos are under pressure everywhere and in serious trouble," says Jef Dupain, AWF's vice president for programs, Central and West Africa. "We have a small window of time to ensure their future."

The good news is that AWF protects bonobos in critical areas. With your support and partner investments, AWF established two reserves in the DRC's high-priority Maringa-Lopori-Wamba landscape. In the 896,000-acre (3,625km<sup>2</sup>) **Lomako-Yokokala Faunal Reserve**, we train and equip rangers to manage the protected area optimally. As a result, bonobos there are faring well. Tour operators line up to take visitors to see the bonobos. The tourism creates revenue for the reserve, benefits local communities economically, and provides all-important jobs. Also, researchers seek access to the Lomako bonobos, and their work expands our knowledge of this fascinating species.

The **Iyondji Community Bonobo Reserve** came about at the request of the community, which saw how the Lomako reserve benefited local people. We support daily ranger patrols in this essential protected area adjacent to the Luo Scientific Reserve, where Kyoto University

researchers have studied bonobos since the 1970s. Together, Luo and Iyondji comprise one of the largest blocks of bonobo habitat in the region.

To support **strategic conservation**, AWF uses satellite imagery and GIS software to map and predict trends in habitat loss and fragmentation as well as human encroachment. In a recent study, AWF ecologist David Williams integrated ground survey data with satellite imagery to identify forested areas likely to support other bonobo populations and to define linkages between major bonobo habitat blocks. AWF and partners will use this information to facilitate **collaborative land-use planning** sessions with communities and government entities such as the park service. The result should be **new or improved protected areas** for bonobos along with zones for livelihood uses such as smallholder farming.

There's still so much more to do, especially given the likelihood that commercial logging and mining operations will eventually open new roadways into the Congo Basin and establish operations there. But with your help, we can ensure that economic development never comes at the expense of our cousin, the peaceable ape.

*Thank you for help protecting the rare bonobo. To learn how to do more, please visit [awf.org](http://www.awf.org).*



### Did you know?

Bonobos spend a lot of time in tree canopies and, like chimpanzees, they make nest beds in trees.



## *Expanding a park for gorillas*

**M**ountain gorillas are the only great ape species experiencing a population rise, a model conservation success. But we must not lose sight of the fact that they are still the world's most endangered ape. About 1,000 remain today, living in only two places — the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda and the Virunga massif, which extends into Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Thankfully, this still vulnerable sub-species got a measure of added protection early in 2018 when AWF donated land to expand habitat in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park in the Virungas.

Although it only covers 160 square kilometers, Volcanoes is a national treasure, attracting tourists from all over the world. Most are interested in the area's unique gorilla treks. After hiking the misty mountains, one comes face-to-face with the silverbacks and their families. The trek is an unforgettable

experience with a price tag that reflects the weight and rarity of the adventure.

The new 27.8-hectare (68-acre) addition to the park helps reduce pressure on the gorillas especially as they travel in the narrowest section of the park. The gorillas often cross park boundaries, and if they invade crops, they can get into conflicts with humans. Contact with human settlements also exposes gorillas to disease risk, one of the biggest threats to the gorilla. If mountain gorilla populations are to survive and thrive, Volcanoes National Park must be strategically protected.

AWF bought the land with support from the Annenberg Foundation, specifically to donate it to the Rwandan government as the first park expansion in over 30 years. The expansion helps Rwanda invest in its rich biodiversity and develop economic opportunities through tourism.

Mountain gorillas, Volcanoes National Park and other parks are an economic engine for Rwanda. The country generated \$404 million from tourism in 2016. Ten percent of the revenue from Rwanda parks goes to local communities, which is unprecedented in Africa and a credit to the Rwandan government. Between 2005 and 2015, communities around Volcanoes National Park received over \$1 million, which supports school development, scholarships, infrastructure, employment and other services.

During the land hand-over ceremony in January, AWF President Kaddu Sebunya said: "I am excited by the great strides Rwanda is taking to develop its natural heritage sustainably and guarantee long-term socio-economic stability for its people.

"Through proactive government policies, community involvement, and open governance, Rwanda is demonstrating that development and conservation are not mutually exclusive."



# Wildlife WATCH *Congo Peafowl*

Just like the bonobo, the Congo peafowl is found only in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It's a shy bird that the scientific world didn't even know about until the 1930s. In a story well-known among naturalists and birders, American ornithologist James Chapin saw two unfamiliar feathers tucked into a headdress while traveling through the Congo — but he couldn't find the matching bird for almost 25 years. According to Christine Jackson, author of *Peacock*, in 1936 Chapin finally saw taxidermy versions of the birds, and the next year he returned to the Congo forest. This time, he glimpsed the peafowls "scuttling through the

shrubs." Today, for birdwatchers, a sighting of the elusive peafowl is still regarded as a remarkable feat.

These ground-dwelling birds are the only true pheasant on the continent. They are about as big as a chicken, and the males have a striking white bristly crown. The tail fans out during display, not as large as some of the most impressive peacocks, but their coloring is beautiful nonetheless. The males have a spur on the inside of their legs that is thought to be used for fighting.

Congo peafowls are monogamous, and males (peacocks) help females (peahens) raise

the chicks, which grow to independence quickly.

They are classified as vulnerable to extinction, with an estimated 2,500 and 9,000 individual adults remaining in the wild. Top threats include habitat loss and hunting. (There are reports of the birds being hunted with snares and sold much like chickens in local markets.) Besides humans, Congo peafowls' natural predators include leopards and other large cats, and snakes are known to eat their eggs.

Congo peafowls are the DRC's national bird and appear on colorful postage stamps.



AWF'S WORK TO PROTECT BONOBOS IN RESERVES (SEE PAGE 5) ALSO BENEFITS CONGO PEAFOWL

AJ Haverkamp

## COMMUNITY CONNECTION



Kids generally love wildlife, and AWF benefits, in letters containing inspired art. Here's a sample of the kind of artwork we get, often with donations or requests for more info about helping. The artist here, a third grader, said, "I am very concerned about the elephant and I would like to help. Please send me information on what I can do."



*In decades working on conservation, I have rarely seen this kind of outpouring grief for a wild animal. This time there was a sense of mortification that something horrible had happened. Sudan's death is probably the first time that young Africans have confronted extinction in their lifetime as something real, not as history or a story in a Discovery Channel documentary.*

– **Kaddu Sebunya's** answer to a bloggers' question about the death of Sudan, the world's last male northern white rhino.

You can help AWF protect the world's remaining rhino species. Visit [awf.org](http://awf.org) to learn more or [awf.org/AWNdonate](http://awf.org/AWNdonate) to donate.

### WHY I GIVE...

## Marianne Lazarus: 'We don't have to be heroes...'

I've always loved animals and always wanted to travel. After I retired, I suddenly had extra time, so I began to do both. I started volunteering at an animal shelter. (That was an eye and heart opener!) And, I was fortunate enough to spend a month in Africa. (That was a life changer!)

When I stepped off the plane in the Serengeti, I knew my life was transformed. The Maasai people I met struck me as ethical and gentle, the African landscapes were majestic, and I was impressed by the sovereignty that radiated from the great and small beings that own the plains. I knew what I must do to help, in my very small way, to help keep these beings safe, alive and thriving.

That is why I support the African Wildlife Foundation. I also am in my 14th year as a

volunteer at a no-kill animal shelter, and I founded a non-profit named after a cat that came into the rescue. (Gideon taught me what gentleness and dignity really mean.) I petition, call and write my legislators and local papers about wildlife protection and animal welfare.

Sometimes it feels as if my efforts aren't enough. After all, I'm not there when a wild animal is in crisis and needs special attention and help. I am not on the front lines. But after giving it some thought, I realized that anything we do to help, while perhaps not heroic, is, indeed, valuable. So, my life is now given to wildlife conservation, and AWF is a beneficiary in my will. We don't have to be heroes to save lives. We just have to care.

– **Marianne Lazarus**  
AWF supporter

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