

2008 Africa Section Survey – Summary of Results

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In January and February 2008, members of the Africa Section of the Society for Conservation Biology, as well as subscribers to AfricaList, were emailed a survey about desired priorities for future directions for the Africa Section. 119 people responded. The results are summarized below. 95% of respondents were members of SCB and 71% of respondents were subscribed to AfricaList.

How long have you been a member of SCB's Africa Section?

1 year	40.2%
2 years	12.5%
3 years	20.5%
4 years	9.8%
5 years or more	17.0%

CONSERVATION BIOLOGY PROGRAMS IN AFRICA

Respondents were asked to share details of any conservation biology programs in Africa of which they are aware. Each country mentioned and the number of research programs per country are noted below.

Botswana (3) ; Burkina Faso (1); Cameroon (7); DRC (3); Ethiopia (6); Gabon (2); Gambia (1); Ghana (9); Guinea (5); Kenya (34); Liberia (1); Malawi (1); Mauritius (1); Madagascar (5); Morocco (1); Mozambique (3); Namibia (2); Nigeria (9); Rwanda (1); Sierra Leone (2); South Africa (28); Sudan (1); Tanzania (26); Uganda (17); Zambia (1); Zimbabwe (7); NGOs (23)

CONSERVATION BIOLOGY TEXTS

Respondents were asked, "What conservation biology texts do you use?"

Responses are organized by text author name, frequency of response, and title of text(s).
(note: only texts mentioned by more than one respondent are included here)

Groom, Meffe and Carroll (16): Principles of Conservation Biology

Sutherland, William J. (13): The Conservation Handbook, Conservation Science and Action, Ecological Census Techniques

Primack (11): Primer of Conservation Biology, Essentials of Conservation Biology

Hunter and Gibbs (and Sterling) (7) – Fundamentals of Conservation Biology, Problem Solving in Conservation Biology and Wildlife Management

Soule, M.E. (and Wilcox, B.) (5): Conservation Biology, Viable Populations for Conservation

Borgerhoff Mulder and Coppolilo (2) – Conservation

Caughley, G. & Gunn, A. (2) - Conservation Biology in Theory and Practice

Macdonald and Service (2) - Key Topics in Conservation Biology

Morris and Doak (2) - Quantitative Conservation Biology

Journal Articles from various sources (19)

REGIONAL MEETING

Respondents were asked: **If the Africa Section were to hold a regional meeting, how would you feel about it being organised around "conservation science and policy"? Do you have any suggestions of themes or topics?**

89 people responded to this question and 30 people skipped the question.

67 people (75%) expressed positive support for this topic. Some of the responses included: “A good idea. But would need to attract the policy folks...it would mostly be about the gap between what we know (through science) and what we do (through policy). The challenge would be to bring in the policy folks whether or not they think that science matters.” “As long as it aims to address the issues faced by rural communities.” “This is very critical because effort in conservation that is not linked to policy will not achieve much.” “Very suitable but you should try and ensure that you have some policy wonks and politicians involved.” “This is a very topical theme as without the strong policies to back up the science, the science is useless.”

10 respondents (11%) were neutral about the proposed regional meeting topic:

A few respondents stressed the need to focus on implementation, eg:

The theme is “quite encouraging, but emphasis on implementation of the conservation policy.” “Might be better to explicitly include conservation implementation in the theme thus "Conservation science, policy and implementation."

A couple of respondents made alternative topic suggestions:

“This is ok, although I would prefer to see a Regional meeting focused on field methods to engage communities in conservation practice.” “The most immediate need is capacity building of national scientists across the continent. Once sufficient capacity is in place then we can fine tune their impact by focusing on how these graduates can feed conservation science into policy at the micro-scale.”

10 respondents (11%) expressed negative sentiments about the proposed meeting topic.

Many said the topic was too general, such as “Covers everything, I think (and therefore not very informative).” “Needs to be more specific, I am not sure what this really means, could be relevant to a number of different fields etc. I would prefer the topic to be more specific.” “I think that this would be ineffective. Often in Africa the issue is not science and policy, but rather policy and enforcement.”

AFRICA SECTION ACTIVITIES - PRIORITIES

Respondents were asked to rank (on a 5-point scale) several activities that the Africa Section could undertake or facilitate, with number 1 being the highest ranked. Results are summarized below.

1. Develop and maintain an updated database of conservation education programs in the Africa region, posted on the SCB website. Interestingly, 25.5% put this as highest priority and 29.8% put it as lowest priority.
2. Develop and maintain an updated list of conservation-relevant course and workshop offerings across the Africa region on the SCB website. 30.5% of respondents ranked this as a 4 (low priority).
3. Facilitate technical support to those interested in developing needs assessments and new curricula for conservation biology education in the Africa region. This question received the highest scores: 27.6% ranked it highest priority (1), 20.4% as 2 and 29.6% as 3.
4. Develop and offer short topical courses in conservation biology. 23.2% ranked this as 1 and 24.2% ranked it as 2.
5. Develop and offer short courses on improving teaching in conservation biology, and provide a forum for the exchange of resources and ideas on teaching conservation biology for faculty members in the Africa region. This question received a wide range of responses, with 25.2% listing it as priority 2 versus 26.2% listing this as lowest priority (5).

Respondents were asked an open-ended question: If you are interested in short courses, please list the course topics you would find useful.

A wide variety of topics were suggested for possible future short courses. The suggested topics are highlighted below and ranked by frequency of response.

Conservation and People (*Human Ecology, Social Science*) (29)

Conservation Tools (27)

Conservation of Species/Resources (21)

Ecology and Biodiversity (16)

Geographic Information Systems, GIS (15)

Conservation Policies and Economics (9)

Conservation Education (8)

Conservation Management (7)

Women's Studies/Participation (4)

Conservation Science (4)

Climate Change (3)

Bushmeat (3)

Restoration (3)