



Society for Conservation Biology

Social Science Working Group

ANNUAL REPORT

2008

...strengthening conservation social science and its application to conservation practice...

www.conservationbiology.org/SSWG

2008 marked the five-year anniversary of the Society for Conservation Biology’s Social Science Working Group (SCB SSWG). Recognizing this important milestone, the SSWG Board of Directors initiated a strategic planning process to reflect on past accomplishments and to chart a course the next five years.

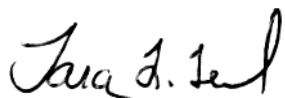
We began this planning process with an assessment of our contributions to date and of possible future directions for the SSWG. This two-part review – led by David Bray (Florida International University) and Lynne Doner Lotenberg (independent consultant) – surveyed SSWG members and past and present SSWG Board members; interviewed key individuals inside and outside the Society, and examined SSWG internal documents and the published literature on social science in biodiversity conservation. The assessment concluded that the SSWG represented “an historic achievement,” but also highlighted numerous challenges and areas for further development.

We used results of this assessment, together with member input and SCB Executive Office feedback, as the foundation for developing the 2009-2014 SSWG Strategic Plan. Initially outlined during a two-day Board retreat and refined over several months, the new strategic plan reaffirms the existing SSWG mission but proposes future investment in a mix of novel foci and longstanding areas of emphasis. Further information, including a copy of the plan, can be found on the SSWG website: www.conservationbiology.org/SSWG.

The SSWG made several other important strides in 2008. First and foremost, the SSWG received its formal three-year charter as a Working Group from the SCB Board of Governors. We also coordinated social science content at the SCB annual meeting; sponsored a four-day short course; partnered with the University of Cambridge and SCB sections to identify *100 Questions of Importance to the Conservation of Global Biological Diversity*; launched the conservation social science Expert Directory; and expanded the SSWG Ambassador program. These activities build upon previous SSWG successes: organizing symposia, workshops, and trainings; developing tools and resources for conservation scholars and practitioners; and sponsoring travel and fellowships for early career and low income conservation social scientists.

Finally, as part of our planning process, the SSWG Board decided to initiate a leadership transition once we completed the new strategic plan. Accordingly, one of us (Mike) recently stepped down as SSWG President, with the other (Tara) stepping up to assume these responsibilities.

Thank you for all your help in developing the strategic plan and continuing to advance the mission of the SSWG. We look forward to your support as we explore new directions in the coming year!



Tara L. Teel, Ph.D.
President
SCB Social Science Working Group



Michael B. Mascia, Ph.D.
Past President
SCB Social Science Working Group

Mission

The mission of the Social Science Working Group (SSWG) is to strengthen conservation social science and its application to conservation practice.

Vision

By 2010, we envision:

- conservation social science fully integrated within the structure, activities, and membership of the Society for Conservation Biology;
- increased social science awareness and capacity among conservation scientists and practitioners;
- widespread recognition of the SSWG as the leading organization for integration of social science into the science and practice of biodiversity conservation.

Goals

The SSWG has three principal goals:

1. Advance the development and dissemination of social scientific knowledge relevant to the conservation of biological diversity.
2. Foster the use of social scientific knowledge to resolve conservation problems.
3. Develop and carry out organizational core functions efficiently and effectively.

OBJECTIVE 1. Conservation social science fully integrated within the structure, activities, and membership of the Society for Conservation Biology

2008 Accomplishments

Structure

- Received formal charter as Working Group from SCB Board of Governors.
- Actively participated in SCB Conference, Development, Education, Membership, and Publications Committees
- Served on Scientific Program Committee for SCB 2008 annual meeting
- Assisted Local Organizing Committee with preparations for 2009 SCB annual meeting
- Began planning for 2010 SCB annual meeting with Local Organizing Committee

Activities

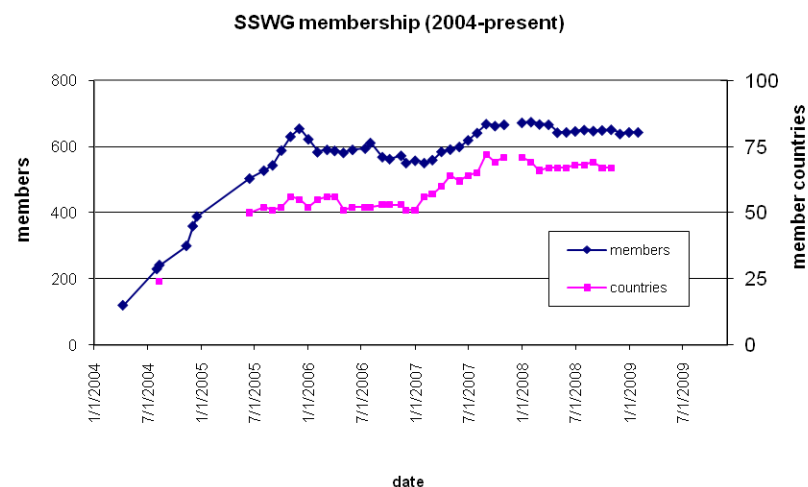
- Drafted SSWG Strategic Plan (2009-2014)
- Conducted independent SSWG Program Review (2003-2008)
- Surveyed SSWG members to assess progress & future priorities.
- Joined with SCB sections to identify *100 Questions of the Greatest Importance to the Conservation of Global Biological Diversity* (Cambridge, UK; September, 2008)
- Co-sponsored networking event with the Austral and Neotropical America Section at 2008 SCB annual meeting
- Partnered with SCB North America Section and SCB 2010 Local Organizing Committee to solicit funds & organize workshop *Developing a National Network of Conservation*

Professionals to Address Complex and Pressing Conservation Problems in Canada (Ottawa; April 2009. Received Cdn \$25,000.

- Partnered with SCB North America Section and Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) on proposal *Conservation social science in Canada: assessing and prioritizing research directions in an emerging discipline* (SSHRC Canada; received Cdn \$61,500)

Membership

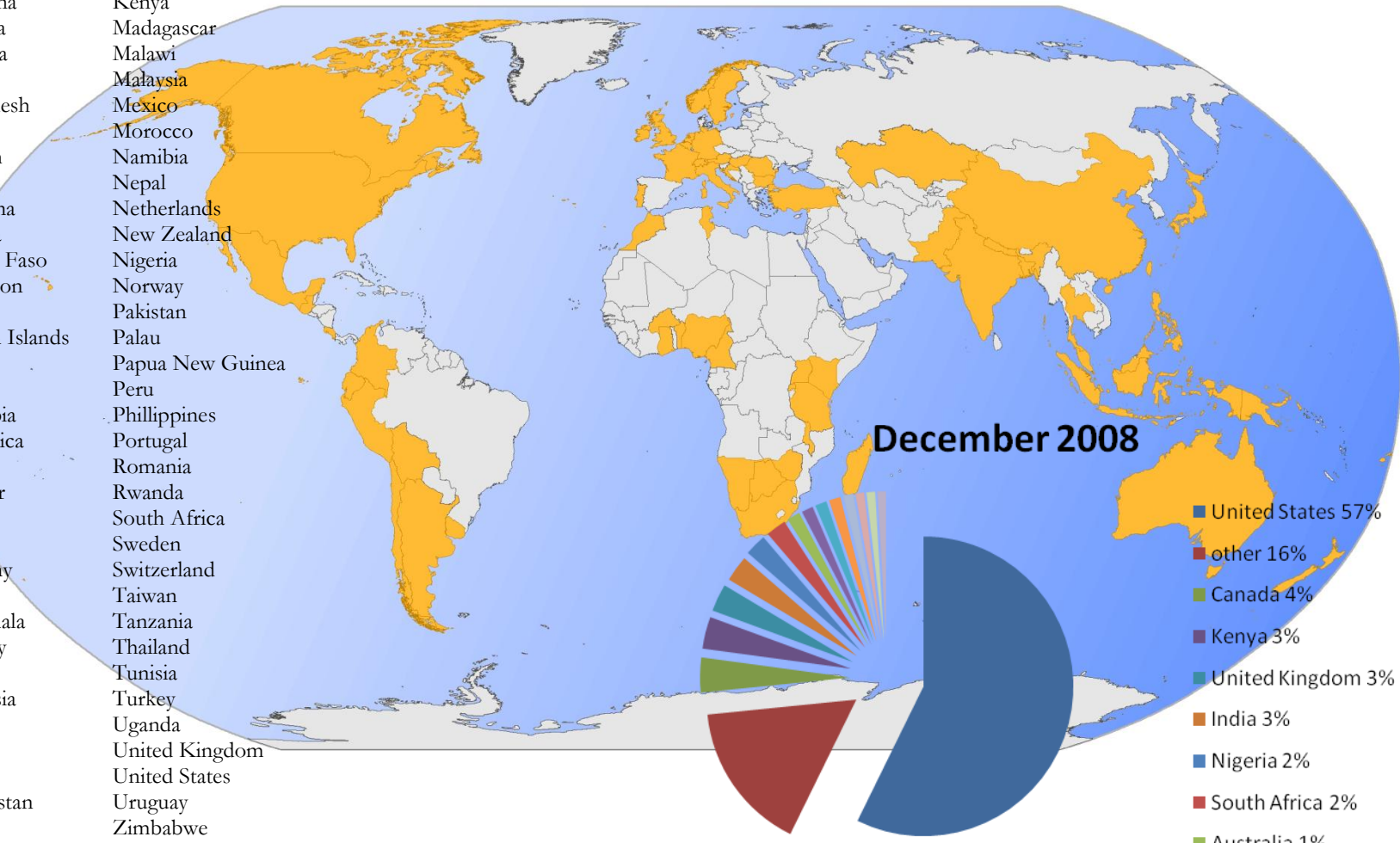
- Experienced 4% decline in membership (n=639) and 8% decline in country representation (n=65)
- Expanded Ambassadors program to include 19 Ambassadors (+27%) in 15 countries (+25%)



SSWG Membership

Countries Represented

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Argentina | Kenya |
| Armenia | Madagascar |
| Australia | Malawi |
| Austria | Malaysia |
| Bangladesh | Mexico |
| Benin | Morocco |
| Belgium | Namibia |
| Bolivia | Nepal |
| Botswana | Netherlands |
| Bulgaria | New Zealand |
| Burkina Faso | Nigeria |
| Cameroon | Norway |
| Canada | Pakistan |
| Cayman Islands | Palau |
| Chile | Papua New Guinea |
| China | Peru |
| Colombia | Phillippines |
| Costa Rica | Portugal |
| Croatia | Romania |
| Ecuador | Rwanda |
| Fiji | South Africa |
| France | Sweden |
| Germany | Switzerland |
| Ghana | Taiwan |
| Guatemala | Tanzania |
| Hungary | Thailand |
| India | Tunisia |
| Indonesia | Turkey |
| Ireland | Uganda |
| Italy | United Kingdom |
| Japan | United States |
| Kazakhstan | Uruguay |
| | Zimbabwe |



Total Membership = 639

Total Countries Represented = 65

OBJECTIVE 2. Increased social science awareness and capacity among conservation scientists and practitioners

2008 Accomplishments

Learning Forums

- Coordinated social science components of 2008 SCB annual meeting:
 - 2 short courses
 - 7 symposia
 - 6 workshops
 - 1 discussion group
 - Dozens of contributed presentations
- Organized roundtable discussion *Conducting multi-disciplinary social science research as a graduate student* (American Museum of Natural History symposium *Sustaining Cultural and Biological Diversity in a Rapidly Changing World: Lessons for Global Policy*)
- Sponsored 2 public lectures:
 - Art Blundell, Ph.D. *Armed Conflict, Natural Capital, and Biodiversity Conservation in West Africa: The Role of Peace Parks*
 - Rick Stepp, Ph.D. *Global Analysis of Biocultural Diversity: Implications for Conservation*
- Explored opportunities to partner on future offerings of *Pathways to Success: Integrating Human Dimensions into Fish and Wildlife Management* (conference led by Colorado State U.).

Training

- Co-sponsored and led 4-day short course: *The Role of the Social Sciences in Conservation Planning* at SCB 2008
- Partnered with SCB Asia and North America sections on proposal *Building a Global Community of Conservation Social Scientists: Capacity Building for Future Conservation Leaders* (\$107,625; unfunded)
- Explored opportunities for collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India.

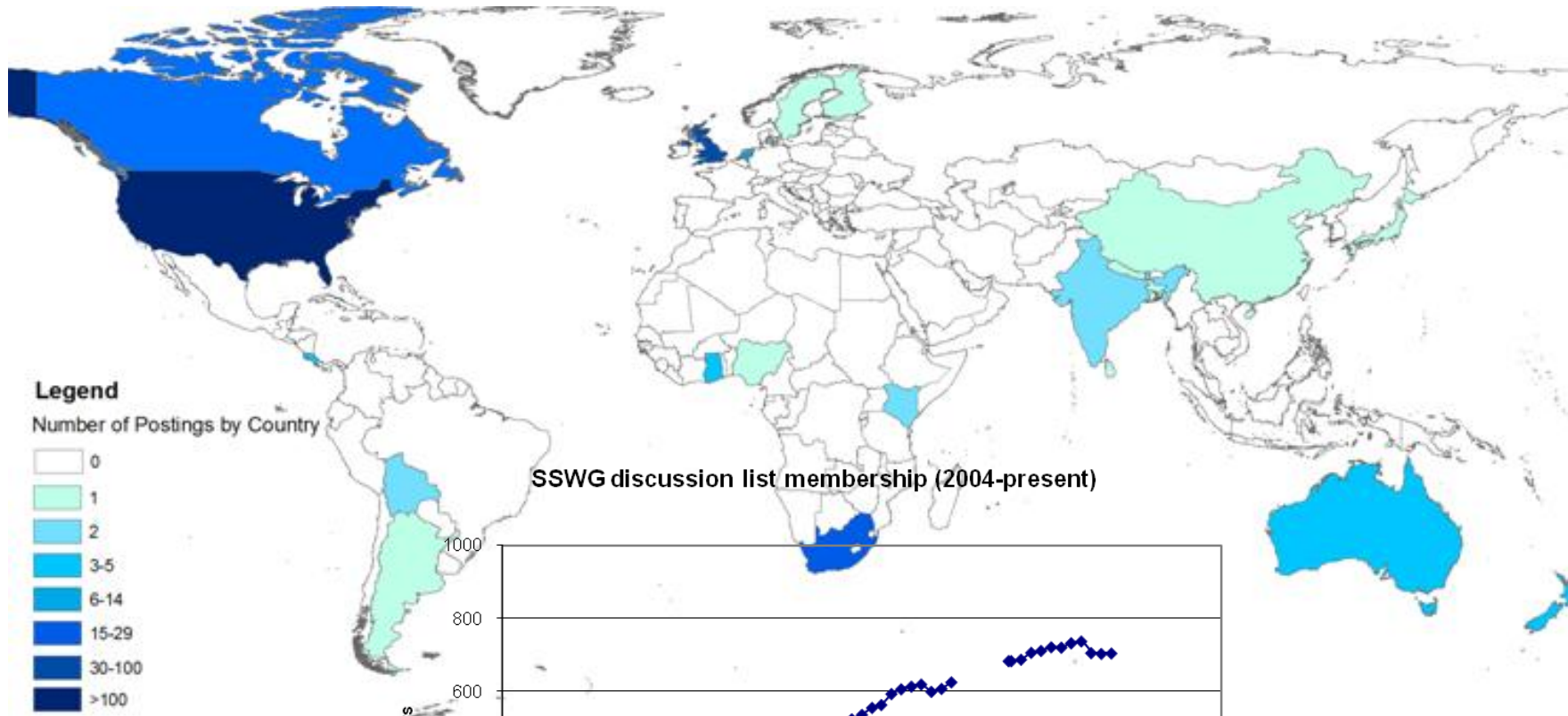


Social Science Plenary. One highlight of the 2008 SCB Annual Meeting was a plenary lecture by Diane Russell, former SSWG Board Member. Her lecture on conservation in Africa drew a crowd of nearly 1000 people. All five plenary speakers at SCB 2008 had social science backgrounds or experience.

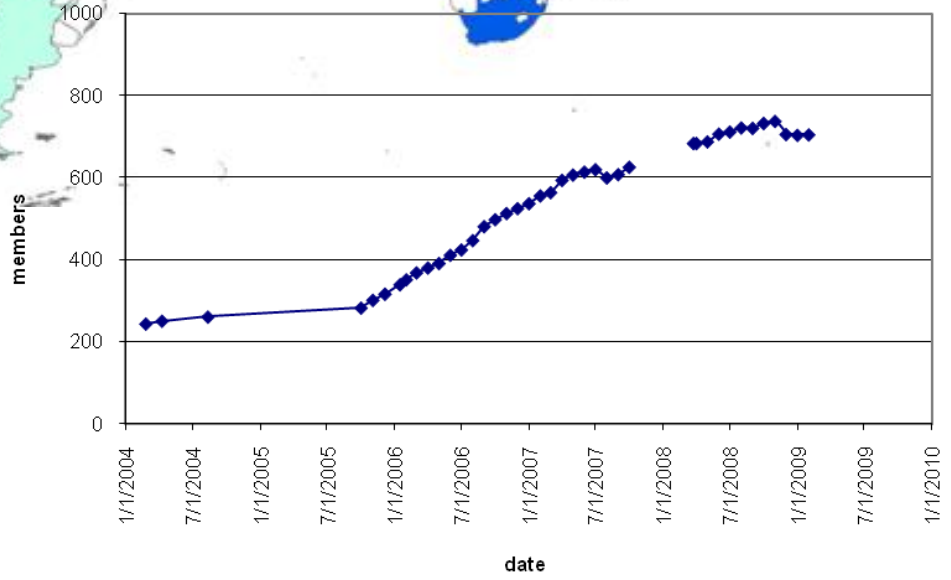
Online Resources

- Launched conservation social science Expert Directory. 141 social scientists have registered in the Directory, including 11% of SSWG membership.
- Maintained active discussion list, with 15.6% increase in membership.
- Added 2 Working Paper editors and received 3 submissions.

SSWG Discussion List



SSWG discussion list membership (2004-present)



OBJECTIVE 3. Widespread recognition of the SSWG as the leading organization for integration of social science into the science and practice of biodiversity conservation.

2008 Accomplishments

Independent program review

- “The SSWG has very notably raised the profile of the social sciences within the SCB. The social sciences are now clearly integrated within the structure, activities, and membership of the overall society.”
- “The SCB also has much reason to be grateful to the SSWG, since it is allowing it to realize a long-held but mostly unrealized vision of disciplinary integration.”
- “The SSWG truly represents a historic achievement; it has undertaken the fusion of the two lines of thought [ecology and social science] proposed by Aldo Leopold in the 1930s.”
- SSWG “is the first sustained effort to integrate social scientists into a professional association of biologists. No professional association of social scientists is making any such sustained effort to incorporate biologists.”¹

Publications

- SSWG highlighted in:
 - *Ecology* (March 2008) as “rapidly growing”. The article, a book review for *People Skills for the Conservation Professional*, emphasized that “it is hard to imagine a conservation project that does not have a strong emphasis on the importance of working effectively with local people”.

¹ Quotations from Bray, David. (2008). *Strategic Review of the Society for Conservation Biology’s Social Science Working Group*. Washington, DC: Society for Conservation Biology.

- *Frontiers in Ecology* (April 2008) in an article entitled “Conservation on the Couch”, by Katherine Ellison, which focused on “eco-therapy”.

SSWG Member Survey

- 66% learned more social science relevant to their work through SSWG
- 62% said that since SSWG's founding, state of social science *within SCB* improved
- 62% said SSWG positively impacted integration of social & natural sciences to address conservation problems *beyond SCB*
- 62% said SSWG advanced development/dissemination of scientific knowledge relevant to conservation of biological diversity
- 60% said SSWG fostered use of social science knowledge to resolve conservation problems



“Pathways to Success” conference in CO draws diverse crowd. Photo courtesy of Tara Teel.

Financial Report

In 2008, the SSWG began the year with a balance of \$6002.81.

Opening balance	6002.81
<i>Income</i>	
Moore Foundation	5000
TOTAL INCOME	5000
<i>Expenses</i>	
Fellowship awards	200
Contracts and Honoraria	8142.14
Board Retreat	1862.36
TOTAL EXPENSES	10204.50
NET INCOME	-5204.50
CLOSING BALANCE	798.31

The SSWG account is managed in a sub-account by the Society for Conservation Biology and disbursed as instructed by the SSWG. The SSWG Audit Chair, in consultation with the SSWG President and the SSWG Chief Financial Officer, has conducted an analysis of the spending from this account, and has confirmed that the moneys in the account, as of December 31st, 2008, were as follows: \$798.31. This is consistent with the report from the SCB office.

Tammy Lewis, Ph.D.
Chair, Audit Committee

Contributions

The SSWG is immensely grateful to the individuals and organizations that provided direct support to the SSWG, as well as financial and in-kind contributions that supported SSWG activities through support to individual SSWG Board and Committee members.

Direct SSWG support

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
The Christensen Fund

Direct Support to SSWG Board members

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

In-kind support

Organizations:

SCB - Executive Office
University of Tennessee-Chattanooga
World Wildlife Fund

Individuals

David Aborn (University of Tennessee-Chattanooga)
Danielle Mota (SCB)
Jane Packard (Texas A&M University)



Fisherman in Mozambique. Photo courtesy of Colette Wabnitz.

SSWG Ambassadors 2008

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Austral and Neotropical America

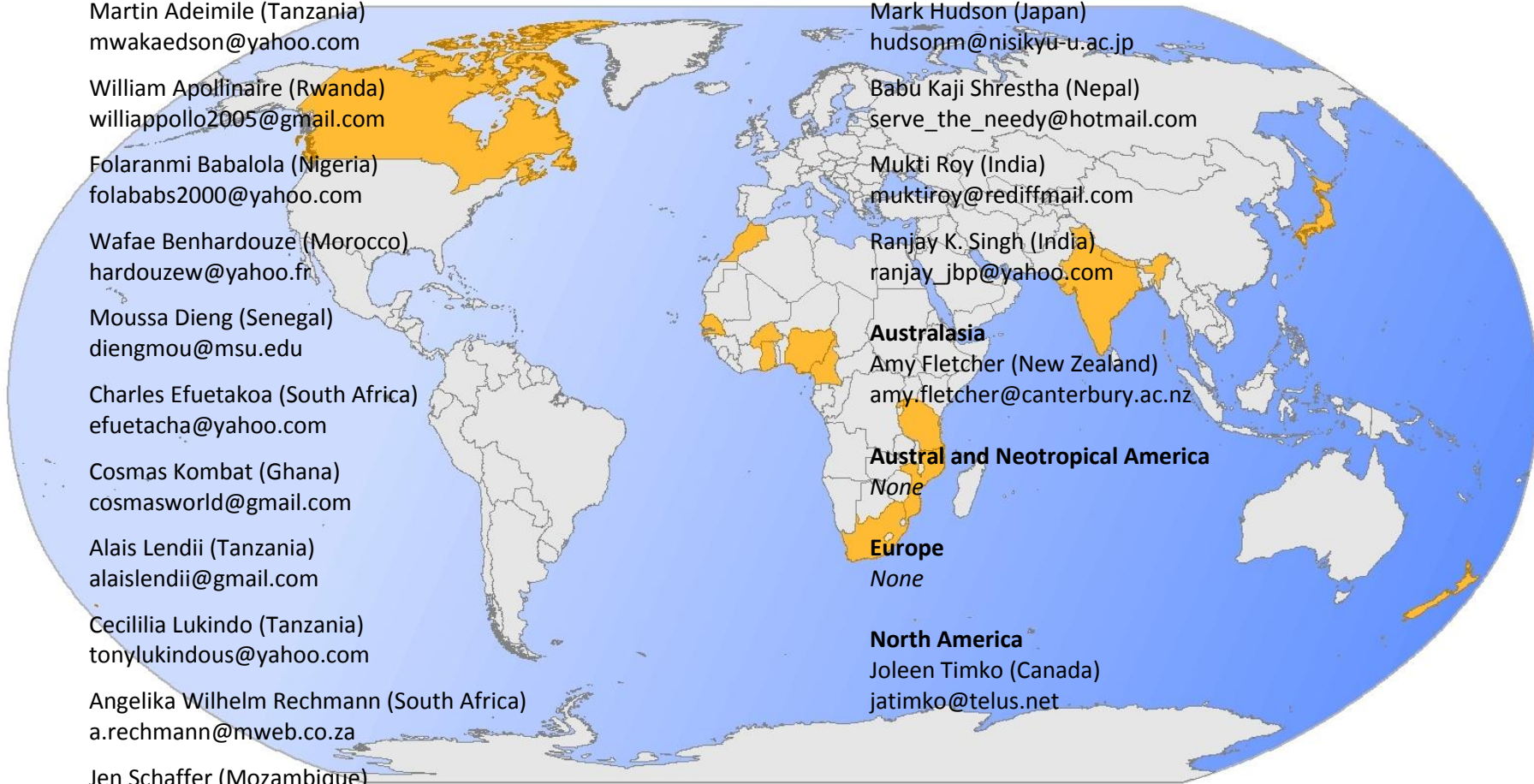
None

Europe

None

North America

Joleen Timko (Canada)
jatimko@telus.net



Committees

The SSWG accomplishes its work through volunteer Committees.

Audit Committee

Tammy Lewis, Chair, Muhlenberg College
Beth Caniglia, Oklahoma State University
Christie Manning, Hamline University
Mac Parish, Stanford University

Communication Committee

Angelika Wilhelm-Rechmann, Chair, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Nejem Rahem, Vice-Chair, University of New Mexico
Mac Parish, Stanford University
Rodolfo Tello, web development, American University
Nathalie Walker, discussion list moderator, Greenpeace International

Conservation Committee

Tara Teel, Chair, Colorado State University
Diane Russell, Vice Chair, US Agency for International Development
Shannon Earle, Conservation International
Rodolfo Tello, American University

Education Committee

David Hoffman, Chair, Mississippi State University
Verna DeLauer, University of New Hampshire
Altaf Hussain, IUCN Pakistan
Dyana LaRosa, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
Monica V. Ogra, Gettysburg College
Jane Packard, Texas A&M University

Membership Committee

Solange Bandiaky, Chair, Rights and Resources Initiative
David Bray, Florida International University
Jan van der Ploeg, University of Leiden
Mark Zegler, University of California-Santa Barbara
Sita Zougouri, Coordinator, Ambassador program

Nominations Committee

William Forbes, Chair, Stephen F. Austin University
Katrina Brandon, Conservation International
Nejem Raheem, University of New Mexico
Diane Russell, US Agency for International Development
Peter Wilshusen, Bucknell University

Policy Committee

Murray Rudd, Chair, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Program Committee

Richard L. Wallace, Chair, Ursinus College
Murray Rudd, Vice Chair, Memorial University of Newfoundland
David Cherney, University of Colorado at Boulder
Andrew Millington, Texas A&M University
Ashley Schafer, Ursinus College
Kathryn Semmens, Pew Environment Group

Student Affairs Committee

Annie Claus, Chair, Yale University
Annie MacFayden, University of Georgia
Radhika Govindrajan, Yale University
Oliver Pergams, University of Illinois at Chicago
Rebecca Witter, University of Georgia

The Social Science Working Group Board

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Annie Claus, Student Affairs Committee Chair
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Michael Mascia, SCB Board Social Science Representative
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Photo courtesy of Tara Teel