



African Conservation Telegraph



African Conservation Telegraph
Biology Department

Volume 1 Issue 1

May 2004

Africa Section Newsletter Unveiled!

Welcome to the first edition of the **African Conservation Telegraph**, a newsletter published by the Africa Section of the Society for Conservation Biology (<http://www.conbio.org/AFRICA>). The aim of this newsletter is to inform readers on conservation issues throughout the continent of Africa. Further, we hope the newsletter will also function as an information clearinghouse. It is meant to provide appropriate and relevant information to general conservation workers, managers, policymakers, academics and students in the field of conservation. The newsletter will present articles from both scientific and non-scientific disciplines but with an emphasis on biological conservation and written in a language understandable to a wide audience.

Contributions on empirical or theoretical work from all disciplines with implications for biological conservation will be accepted as space allows. Short communications on conservation projects and programs in Africa as well as short reviews, general stories, and creative writing pieces are also welcome. Articles that have appeared or are about to appear in mainstream and major publica-

tions can be summarized in a few words for the newsletter with appropriate acknowledgement of the source. Submissions must be electronic and preferably in MS Word format. While there are no specific guidelines for writing articles, those that make use of either citations or quotations should follow the guidelines for articles in Conservation Biology which may be found at <http://www.conservationsbiology.org/SCB/Publications/ConsBio/Instructions>.

We plan to begin with three issues per year. The newsletter format will include invited articles, a "Science, Society and Development" section, a "Hot Topics" area, letters to the editor, a space for listing grants, funding and job opportunities, pieces of creative writing by the membership, a space to address indigenous knowledge, and an area in which we introduce a member of the Africa Section to the readership so we can all continue to get to know one another. We

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From the Editor

You are reading the first edition of ACT, the African Conservation Telegraph, published by and for the Africa Section of the Society for Conservation Biology. We've experienced a few bumps along the way in getting this newsletter out but are optimistic about the power of this newsletter to help open channels of communication among people interested in conservation in Africa.

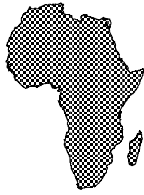
I would like to thank in particular the members of the newsletter subcommittee, listed on the inside of page 2, for making this first edition of the newsletter happen. Keep in mind that the newsletter format will change some over time as we get more submissions from our membership. In particular, please pay attention to the "Africa Section Newsletter Unveiled" article (p.1) and the "Call for submissions" (p. 6), which detail information about the types of submissions we encourage. We encourage not only scholarly pieces, but also creative writing. We are also especially looking forward to submissions on indigenous knowledge. This is your newsletter. Please don't hesitate to contact any member of the editorial team with your comments and suggestions.

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African Conservation Telegraph



www.conbio.org/AFRICA.

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The African Conservation Telegraph (ACT) will be produced three times per year to provide information about conservation on the continent of Africa. The African Conservation Telegraph is free of charge, available electronically online (www.conbio.org/AFRICA) and via AfricaList, the listserv for the Africa Section of the Society for Conservation Biology. It is also available in hard copy for those who are registered SCB members without access to the internet. Submissions in English should be sent to Erika Barthelmess and in French to Michel Masozera.

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Newsletter

(Continued from page 1)

plan to accept submissions in both French and English. Articles in French should be sent to Michel Masozera (mmasozera@wcs.org) and in English to Erika Barthelmess (barthelmess@stlawu.edu).

The newsletter is free of charge, available electronically online and via AfricaList, and in hard copy for those who are registered SCB members without access to the internet. Donations to help circulate hard copies to public sector organizations, NGO's, IGO's and schools in Africa are most welcome.

We hope this newsletter will serve as an important forum of communication for not only members of the Africa section but also for any person interested in Conservation in Africa. Your thoughtful contributions will help the Africa Section achieve that goal.

Africa Section Election Results

The Africa Section recently held an officer's election. The following people will serve as members of the Board of Directors for the section in the term 2004—2006. Feel free to contact them with ideas on how we can improve section activities.

- | President — Michel Masozera, Wildlife Conservation Society, Rwanda.
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- | President Elect— Shedrack M. Mashauri, mashauri@eudoramail.com
- | Membership and Nominations Officer — Beth Kaplin, Antioch New England Graduate school and Center for Tropical Ecology and Conservation, USA.
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- | Information Officer— Stephen Mufutau Awoyemi, Tropical Conservancy, Nigeria, stephen_awoyemi@yahoo.com
- | Board member—Paula Kahumbu, paula@wananchi.com

AfricaList keeps you connected

Perhaps you are aware of AfricaList, the listserv for the Africa Section, maintained by the Society for Conservation Biology and managed by Beth Kaplin, List Moderator of the Africa Section, SCB. Anyone can join the listserv, either simply to read or to be a part of the conversation. To sign up for the listserv, point your web browser to <http://list.conbio.org/mailman/listinfo/AfricaList/>

The instructions for adding yourself and making changes to delivery options can be displayed in Czech, German, English (USA), Spanish (Spain), Estonian, Finnish, French, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Dutch, Norwegian, Portuguese (Brazil), Russian, or Swedish.

(Continued on page 3)

Communications in the African Section of the Society for Conservation Biology

by Stephen M. Awoyemi

It is manifest that conservation in Africa is yet to be properly cohesive; and to a large extent herein is an uncommon opportunity to meeting the challenges of biodiversity conservation on the continent. It is highly encouraging that the section is already poised along this trajectory of alliance, intra and internationally. The critical need for unison in voice and spirit predicated on a common paradigm is being met (see draft statement of values for the African Section). This unprecedented initiative could serve as a formidable force in Africa to herald survival of biodiversity on the continent. Purposeful solidarity could engender policy influence effectively, from the grassroots. However, communications have a strong role to play as we traverse these paths. This article seriously seeks to sensitize our community of conservationists in Africa and beyond to better appreciate the relevance of effective communications in the African Section.

Cyber cafes are sprouting at a fast rate in many cities in Africa: an opportunity for a virtual community. Even more than this, information and communications technology is pushing its frontier into remote areas. A number of protected areas in Africa now enjoy internet facilities. It is now possible to access your e-mail and browse the internet at affordable rates almost about anywhere in many major cities in Africa. Computers and information technology have become the order of the day on the continent.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that e-mail and web communications have a vital role in today's coalitions, interrelations, education, advocacy, collaborations, research and em-

“Communication and information are different and indeed largely opposite—yet interdependent”.
Peter F. Drucker.

AfricaList keeps you connected

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Or send email to AfricaList-request@list.conbio.org with one line in the body, in this format:
subscribe [address=YourEmailAddressHere] (replace YourEmailAddressHere with your email, but DO include the brackets [] around your email)

Be sure you send email from the address you want to subscribe with...you will only be able to post to the listserve with the subscribed address. A listserve archive is available, but

powerment. This opportunity may be conscientiously exploited, allowing us to absolve ourselves of probable pitfalls and consolidate mutual benefits. As one of the major mandates of the section is capacity building for Africans, this could be a good point to start from. I recommend the following: 1) There should be proper communication bridge between the Africa Section members and management. Members should freely express their musings or opinions to management (there are professionals who are ready and willing to attend to you with the needed empathy). 2) Forums should be encouraged through the African listserve. Ideas and concepts should be shared and discussions raised. Cases of advocacy should be espoused. 3) Students and learners should better appreciate the opportunity of mentorship through the African Section. Management should expatiate on the itinerary of the section's mentorship program and how potential beneficiaries can avail themselves of this opportunity. 4) Polls on consensus should be highly encouraged through the African listserve. We envisage a large community of conservationists in a short time to come.

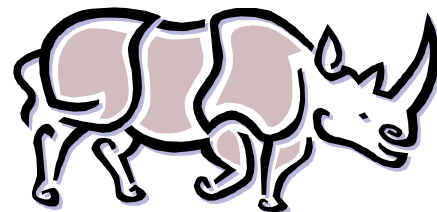
Conclusively, communication is a *sine qua non* for proper and cohesive organization for conservation biology in Africa. You can't move people to action unless you first move them with emotion. The heart comes before the head, posits John C. Maxwell.

Note: To join the African listserve please go to www.conbio.org/AFRICA.

you must be a subscriber to view it: <http://list.conbio.org/mailman/private/africalist/>

Please think about AfricaList when notices about job openings, funding opportunities, workshops, news stories or conferences related to issues of conservation in Africa pass your desktop. We encourage you to send these contributions to AfricaList so that it can continue to network conservation biologists and others across the globe.

“In the end we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught”.
— Baba Dioum, Senegal



One world, One health

At the World Parks Congress held in September 2003 in South Africa, the Wildlife Conservation Society Field Veterinary Program and partners such as the OAU—IBAR as well as the IUCN Veterinary and Southern African Sustainable Use Specialist Groups launched a new initiative to address important health issues in areas where humans, domestic animals, and wildlife coexist. Called AHEAD (Animal Health for the Environment and Development), the program provides a forum for exchanging ideas from a range of fields to combat introduced and emerging diseases and their impacts on conservation as well as human livelihoods. In the conservation and development communities, people working on health issues are often isolated from counterparts addressing environmental issues. At the Congress, nearly 80 veterinarians, ecologists, economists, wildlife managers, agriculturalists and other experts from Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe and elsewhere participated in a highly interactive two-day forum. Participants developed multidisciplinary project ideas for addressing critical national and transboundary field- and policy-related needs in their regions. The full AHEAD Invitees Briefing Packet is available online at www.fieldvet.org under the “World Parks Congress Ani-



mal Health Forum” section, and includes the complete agenda, abstracts of presentations, as well as biographical sketches of most of the invitees. For more information about AHEAD point your web browser to www.fieldvet.org.

Left photo: East African participants helping to organize AHEAD at the World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa, Sept. 2003. Photo by Dr. Robert Cook.

“It is not fair for countries whose only elephants are found in zoos to tell us how to manage our wildlife”
— Ms. Tawenga, Zimbabwe

Mountain Gorilla Population Grows

[Adapted from the African Wildlife Foundation news headlines (<http://www.awf.org>)]

As of January 2004, there were 56 more Mountain Gorillas roaming in the Virunga Volcanoes than there were in 1989 when the last census was taken. This jump amounts to a 17% increase in numbers. This increase in population size is notable, given that it occurred in the midst of intense political instability and the Rwandan genocide, which took the lives of more than 750,000 people.

Over the years, the Virunga Mountain Gorilla population has been threatened by poaching, loss of habitat, civil unrest and disease. Conservation efforts initiated by the International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP), a coalition of the African Wildlife Foundation, Fauna and Flora International and World Wide Fund for Nature have helped ensure that the mountain gorillas will endure. Transboundary collaboration, ranger-based monitoring, community development, anti-poaching activities and habitat conservation have all helped the mountain gorillas to make this comeback.

The Virunga census was conducted between September and October 2003 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, by six teams who covered the entire

Virunga gorilla habitat range. Population size was estimated by gorilla sightings as well as sign such as fresh night nests.

Results from the Bwindi 2002 census indicated the Bwindi population to be about 320 gorillas. Together with the 324 counted in the Virunga census, the world total is well over 600 mountain gorillas in the wild.

For more information about the mountain gorillas, point your web browser to www.mountaingorillas.org.

Photo Contest deadline extended

As part of our fund raising efforts, the Africa Section is sponsoring an African Nature Photography Contest. Winning entries will be offered to attendees at the 2004 SCB meeting at Columbia University, New York, through a silent auction. The contest is open to anyone. All entries must be received by May 28, 2004. All images must have been taken in Africa and feature native animals, plants, or natural landscapes. Contest winners must grant permission for one high-quality reproduction of their image to be auctioned. Winners retain all rights to their work. Complete contest rules, instructions for submitting entries, an entry form and a question and answer sheet are available from Steve_Caicco@fws.gov

Meet a conservationist...



It seems appropriate that for the first "Meet a Conservationist" column we begin by introducing Michel Masozera to the Africa Section, especially since we recently elected Michel as the section president. Michel was born and raised in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He holds a bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences and a Master's degree from the University of Florida in the USA in Conservation. Currently, Michel lives in Rwanda where he has been working since 2002 for the Wildlife Conservation Society as Country Director. Michel became interested in conservation while growing up in the middle of the Congo rainforest. When Michel returned home to Rwanda in 1994, the country was facing challenges in the resettlement of refugees and of people returning from exile. It was then that Michel realized "...that it was important to have Rwandese who work in conservation to raise the awareness of the

importance of conserving the remaining montane forests." Michel is currently working on two main projects in Rwanda. The first is on the conservation and management of Nyungwe Forest National Park with emphasis on ecotourism development, training of park managers and field staff, ranger-based monitoring, community-based conservation and applied research. The second project aims at restoring biodiversity conservation capacity in the Mountain Forest protected areas in Rwanda.

Michel identifies the top three challenges in his work as 1) working on conservation in a country with a very high population density, 2) the limited capacity of government agencies in charge of protected areas management, and 3) the uncertainty in funding for protected areas due to the political context of the country and the region. When thinking about the African continent as a whole, Michel has identi-

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A conservationist's guide to more effective e-mail communication

by Stephen M. Awoyemi

Trading e-mail has become a daily affair for many conservationists world wide. It is useful therefore, to have some guidelines on how to do this more effectively. Consider using the tactics below:

One e-mail, one topic. Don't try to cover too much territory in a single e-mail. Readers may have trouble deciding which topic is a priority, or may simply miss one item among all the rest. Limit yourself to one subject to avoid misunderstanding¹.

Specify the desired action. Without verbal cues or body language to depend on, the reader needs clear-cut direction that is unambiguous. Leave no room for error¹.

Choose recipients selectively. Everyone receives more e-mail than he or she can read. Restrict your group messages to

readers who need your message in order to get something done. Resist the urge to send copies to everyone in your address book¹.



Let's keep communication open!

Compose courteous e-mail. The recipient of your e-mail is definitely not a computer but a sensitive human being. It is advisable and rewarding to make your e-mails respectful and courteous at all times, desisting from sending rude or disrespectful e-mails.

Review properly before you click on "send". You want to go through your e-mail at least once before you send it. An erroneous e-mail sent is like an egg falling on hard concrete.

¹Adapted from "E-mail: Good news and bad news," by Norm Cadsawan, on the CEO Refresher website.

Explore the new Africa Section website

In late April the Africa Section unveiled its new website. Point your web browser to <http://www.conbio.org/AFRICA> to see all the section has to offer. You'll find information about membership in the section, jobs and other opportunities, news updates, links to conservation-related projects, and much more. The website is new and will continue to grow and change. Check back often.



Call for submissions

The next issue of ACT will be published in October, 2004. We'd love to hear from you. In particular, we are hoping for submissions of:

- | Regional news (Saharan, Sub-Saharan, Tropical, Subtropical)
- | Book reviews
- | Updates on projects
- | Brief extracts or abstracts from recent research

Submissions for the next newsletter are due in English to Erika Barthelmess (barthelmess@stlawu.edu) or in French to Michel Masozera (mmasozera@wcs.org) and will be welcomed until September 15, 2004.

Help us design a logo

We need a logo for the newsletter. It needs to be easy to produce and should help to convey the mission of the Africa Section. If you have ideas, please send them to Stephen Awoyemi at stephen_awayemi@yahoo.com. We'll introduce the new logo in the next edition of the Newsletter. Submissions are due to Stephen not later than August 1, 2004.

Announcements

1. Society for Conservation Biology Annual Meeting , July 30—August 2, 2004, Columbia University, New York City, U.S.A. <http://cerc.columbia.edu/scb2004/>
2. Spatial Data Infrastructure Africa (SDI-Africa) is a free e-mail newsletter for people interested in GIS, remote sensing, and data management issues in Africa. To subscribe, contact klance@usgs.gov. If you are subscribing, please indicate your institutional affiliation and how you learned about the SDI-Africa newsletter. Back issues of the newsletter are at the GSDI and GISD websites <http://www.gsdi.org> or www.opengis.org/gisd/sdi_news.htm.
3. From the Society for Conservation and GIS: Conservationists practicing outside of Western Europe, North

America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan can receive a free copy of "The Conservation Handbook: Research, Management and Policy" by William J. Sutherland. The aim of this book is to provide guidance on the implementation of conservation techniques. The book includes a wide range of methods for ecological research, monitoring, planning, education, habitat management and combining conservation with development. Free copies are provided at cost by the publisher, Blackwell Scientific and are paid for by the author's royalties. The Christensen Fund has generously provided a grant to cover the cost of postage. To obtain a free copy, point your web browser to http://www.nhbs.com/info/sutherland/conservation_handbook.html#Gratis.

Meet a conservationist...

(Continued from page 5)

fied political instability and conflicts in many African countries, poverty as a result of conflicts (which push people to be dependent on natural resources), and a limited awareness on the part of many decision makers as significant conservation challenges.

As new president of the Africa Section, Michel has several

"The survival of our wildlife is a matter of grave concern to all of us in Africa. These wild creatures and wild places they inhabit are not only important as a source of wonder and inspiration, but are an integral part of our natural resources and our future livelihood and well-being"

—Julius Nyerere, Tanzania



What will our logo look like? Maybe you have the answer!

Recently published

1. Thibault, M. and S. Blaney. 2003. The oil industry as an underlying factor in the bushmeat crisis in central Africa. *Conservation Biology* 17(6): 1807-1813
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16. Weladji, R. B., S. R. Moe, and P. Vedeld. 2003. Stakeholder attitudes towards wildlife policy at the Benoue Wildlife Conservation Area, North Cameroon. *Environmental Conservation* 30(4): 334—343.
17. Beresford, P., J. Fjeldsa, and J. Kiure. 2004. A new species of akalat (*Sheppardia*) narrowly endemic in the Eastern Arc of Tanzania. *Auk* 121(1): 23-34.
18. Small, E. and P. M. Catling. 2003. Blossoming treasures of biodiversity 9. African Baobab: the world's fattest tree. *Biodiversity* 4(3): 27—29.
19. Sorensen, L. L. 2004. Composition and diversity of the spider fauna in the canopy of a montane forest in Tanzania. *Biodiversity and Conservation* 13(2): 437—452.
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African Conservation Telegraph

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Find us on the Web!
www.conbio.org/AFRICA

View from the continent

In the Kat River Valley of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, commercial agriculture “knows no biological conservation” and yet marginalized rural people are sustained by remnants of species. What we see today is the legacy of our transitory fore-bearers, and what have we for the yet unborn generation—better or worse? A traditional healer briefs a colleague on the medicinal properties of an Aloe plant.

Caption and photo by Delali Dovie.



Clouds reflected off the surface of Lake Magadi, Kenya. February 2004.

Photo by Erika Barthelmess.

Have a picture to share? You are welcome to submit digital photographs or other artwork with the theme of “View from the continent” to fill this space in the future.

