

## **Society for Conservation Biology, Africa Section**

### **Report from the Section Meeting in Brasilia, 17 July 2005**

**Prepared by Alison Ormsby, Science and Education Officer**

Approximately 40 people attended the Africa Section meeting in Brasilia. After announcements and introductions, attendees met in breakout groups on the following topics:

- short courses,
- planning for the '07 SCB meeting in Port Elizabeth,
- research/funding,
- journals and publishing, and
- women in conservation biology

Following the group discussions, each breakout group reported back to the whole Section on their main conclusions, which are summarized below.

#### **Short Courses**

This group discussed individual experiences with what is currently available in terms of short courses as well as what is needed. They compared university-based courses, technical courses and non-university courses. The conclusion was that there is a need for a **broad needs assessment** of what is actually needed and what is currently available. This needs assessment should be publicized to get more people involved in helping with and taking courses and to understand how the courses could fit into the objectives and strategies of the Africa Section. There is some possibility that the Tropical Biology Association would assist with this effort.

Camille Rebelo (based in Kenya) offered to be the coordinator for this working group. Ron Abrams, who was unable to attend the Section meeting but who is currently an African Section Board Member, has also been involved with the Short Course effort.

Contacts: Camille Rebelo (camillerebelo@hotmail.com)  
Ron Abrams (ronwoolf@ix.netcom.com)

#### **Planning for the '07 SCB meeting in Port Elizabeth**

A working group met during the section meeting as well as on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss how to move forward with preparations for the 2007 SCB meeting. Issues discussed included: developing a meeting logo, communication and marketing about the meeting,

timeframes for all stages of meeting preparation, fundraising and sponsors, developing a local organizing committee (and how this would coordinate with the Executive Office), identifying potential plenary speakers, and the issue of having some of the meeting publicity or abstracts available in French.

Contact: Graham.Kerley (Graham.Kerley@nmmu.ac.za)

### **Research/funding and Journals/Publishing**

These working groups recommended the following:

1. Set up a system for mentoring students and other interested people in publishing papers. This could either be through the Section webpage, a database, or some other clearinghouse or format. The group suggested a database with information on people working in Africa and whether or not they would be available to help with mentoring.
2. Encouraging people to donate hard copies of journals that they do not need anymore. Again, the website could serve as a clearinghouse for this information, to match up contacts. (shipping issues would be arranged by the parties involved).
3. Provide a course in grantwriting, as well as mentoring for editorial and grant preparation assistance.

The suggestion was made that it would be useful to have a session on these topics at the SCB meeting in South Africa.

There is no contact for these topics. After the meeting, Robinson Mugo (robinmugo@kmfri.co.ke) offered to be the contact person, or at least involved with this topic.

### **Women in Conservation Biology**

Notes were taken on the discussion by this working group, but I did not receive them (the reporter was going to email them to me but did not). Based on past email discussions about this group (this is a direct copy and paste), the SCB Africa Group Committee on Young Women Conservation Biologists is acquiring members, getting underway and fleshing out a work programme framework to move ahead the career opportunities for young women African conservation biologists. This could include (but probably not be limited to):

- targeting schools and other fora to promote CB as an exciting and important discipline with a special niche for strong, talented women;
- developing criteria and nomination forms for small awards for emerging women professionals;
- securing funding to develop an incentives framework for women in conservation

biology;

- publication of profiles of women conservation biologists in local and regional media;
- identification of postgraduate scholarship opportunities targeted at African women scientists.
- seeking funding and constructive partnership with other professional capacity initiatives for conservation biologists (obviously including Tropical Biology Association and the Organization for Tropical Studies, but certainly not limited to them).

Contact: Christina Ellis (CEenbrousse@aol.com), Stephen Awoyemi (stephen\_awoyemi@yahoo.com)

Please note that the contacts for the groups do not necessarily match the contacts listed on our Section Webpage. In some cases, at a past meeting a person facilitated a group discussion but may not have intended to be the official contact person for that working group.

The webpage has been recently reformatted by the Executive Office to have a consistent look for the webpages of all SCB Sections.