

Africa



Africa is home to many of the world's most spectacular species and diverse ecosystems. In eastern Africa, large herds of antelope and zebra

cross the savannas in unparalleled migrations. The Congo Basin, the world's second largest forest block, spans the equator and supports three species of great apes. In the Indian Ocean, a near continuous string of coral reefs stretch from northern Kenya to South Africa. From the northern deserts of the Sahara to the southern Kalahari and across the savanna and forests of Central Africa, these diverse assemblages of wildlife species and habitats create the rich fabric of African nature.



Against this majestic backdrop, wildlife is confronted by an array of threats. Human population, illegal hunting, and the conversion of forest into agriculture are increasing throughout Africa. The industrial exploitation of natural resources, such as mining, logging and petroleum exploration, is opening more and more roads into increasingly vulnerable refuges of wildlife habitat. In some countries, political instability undermines the ability of government agencies to protect and manage wildlife. To adequately meet these challenges, African wildlife professionals need not only strong scientific capacity, but also non-traditional skills such as community outreach, conflict resolution, and coalition building.

The goal of the Wildlife Without Borders (WWB)-Africa Program is to assist African nations to develop individual and institutional capacity for biodiversity conservation in and around protected areas. Protected areas play a crucial dual role by providing an important refuge to safeguard key wildlife populations while also creating an opportunity to earn valuable



revenues and improve the livelihoods of neighboring communities. By raising the capacity for wildlife conservation throughout Africa, the WWB-Africa program meets a growing demand for new approaches to conservation. Additionally, the program provides support to mitigate the impact of extractive industries, climate change, human-wildlife conflict, illegal trade in bushmeat, and wildlife disease. Target audiences for training and capacity building support include: wildlife managers, guards, rangers, protected area managers, outreach specialists, community leaders, educators, and decision makers.



Top left: African Wild Dogs Credit: USFWS

Top right: Kenya Bushmeat Symposium participants Credit: BEAN

Above: MENTOR FOREST fellows with key Gabonese and FWS staff Credit: USFWS

The Wildlife Without Borders-Africa Program supports projects designed to strengthen the ability of African institutions and individuals to manage and conserve species, habitats, and ecological processes for the benefit of the people of Africa and the world.

The Wildlife Without Borders Program defines capacity building as strengthening the ability of individuals and organizations to conserve biodiversity. Capacity building approaches include training, facilitating dialogue, program development, and provision of equipment and other resources. Capacity building themes include threat reduction, protected area management, training programs, and decision makers engagement. WWB-Africa builds capacity through our USFWS MENTOR Signature Initiative and through the African Small Grants program.

**USFWS Signature Initiative:
MENTOR-FOREST Fellowship
Program**

Innovative capacity building approaches are needed to address complex conservation challenges in Africa. The USFWS developed its Signature Initiative, the MENTOR Fellowship Program (Mentoring for ENvironmental Training in Outreach and Resource conservation), to build multidisciplinary teams of emerging African conservation leaders who work collaboratively on conservation-development-community partnerships.



Training in Northern Virungas
Credit: Zoological Society of London

The FY2011-2012 MENTOR-FOREST Program through a cooperative agreement with the *Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN)* of the Government of Gabon addresses logging which is the most pressing threat to Central Africa's wildlife and forests. It offers strategies to resolve these challenges both within and beyond protected area boundaries. This holistic team training program includes a combination of coursework with international and regional experts, personal guidance from mentors, field internships with conservation organizations, private businesses and national government collaborators, and team projects directed toward the development of alternative forest use strategies.

A team from Gabon and the Republic of Congo is addressing the threats to forests and wildlife through direct activities, management, and policy development. They earn a new Master's degree through *Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts*. This program replicates the successful FY08-FY09 MENTOR model that focused on the illegal bushmeat trade in eastern Africa.

African Small Grants

In FY 2011, WWB-Africa funded capacity building efforts to reduce threats to wildlife, support protected area management and training, strengthen regional wildlife colleges and universities, and engage decision makers. Examples of these vital efforts include:

In Cameroon, WWB-Africa provided regional scholarships for students and support for building the technical capacity of faculty at the *Ecole de Faune de Garoua*. Through this cooperative agreement, faculty will more effectively teach and conduct applied research on key issues of importance to wildlife conservation in forest ecosystems.

In Democratic Republic of Congo, WWB-Africa is helping to train rangers from the *Institut Congolais*

pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) on survey and monitoring techniques as part of a major field-based okapi conservation status assessment. Informative field guides on okapi ecology and public awareness-raising materials are being produced through broader collaborative conservation and community education efforts.

In Sierra Leone, WWB-Africa is assisting faculty at Njala University to conduct a conservation capacity needs assessment, and develop and implement new in-service training short courses. These courses will address priorities for wildlife conservation and protected area management in government agencies, civil society and the private sector.

In multiple countries of Francophone West Africa, WWB-Africa supported training for 20 conservationists during a 12 week program on protected area management. Trainees learned specific tools and technical skills that enable them to better understand conservation challenges and deal with current dynamics within and surrounding protected areas in the region.

In Malawi, WWB-Africa funded the development of course materials for training wildlife managers from east and southern Africa to improve management of cheetah and wild dogs. The course will eventually create a web-based network for these managers to share information and experience on resolving conflict and promoting coexistence.

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