

# **Africa Interim Regional Report for International Zoo Educators Association February 2011**

## **Africa Regional Report by Regional Representative Jone Porter (February 2011)**

Due to the diversity of organisations in Africa, there has been a great variety of activities that have taken place over the last six months.

### **Dian Fossey Gorilla Foundation, Rwanda**

**By Joseph Karama, Conservation Education Program Manager, Karisoke Research Center**

The Gorilla Foundation believes that education is key to empowering people who live near the gorillas in Africa to become stewards of their shared ecosystem. Our education programs in Rwanda and Congo build awareness in local communities of conservation, health and other important issues; increase the strength and capacity of local educational institutions; and provide further training for those already working in conservation.

Joseph Kamara, Conservation Education Program Manager, Karisoke Research Centre

The three main achievements in the Karisoke Conservation Education Program during the last six months are: a conservation education program in four schools reaching over 1,500 primary school children; support for six undergraduate students to complete their dissertations on subjects related to biodiversity and the conservation of the mountain gorilla and an annual event for 30 local community leaders to visit the Volcanoes National Park to see gorillas and golden monkeys. These events are detailed below:

#### 1. Implementing the Disney conservation education program in primary schools

From August to September 2010, the Karisoke Research Centre, implemented for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running a Conservation Education Program designed with the assistance of the Disney Animal Kingdom for Primary 3 and Primary 5 pupils in four primary schools around the Volcanoes National Park. The program introduced the children to the diversity of the animals in the forest, their ecology with emphasis on the mountain gorilla, threats and shared actions that even children can do to help protect the animals and their habitat.



A pre-post evaluation of the program was carried out to establish the change in knowledge on the part of the participating children, and the results showed a significant increase in knowledge of the children on ecology and threats to the wild animals and plants after taking part in the program.

#### 2. Support for undergraduate conservation research in Rwanda

Six students from the biology department of the National University of Rwanda were hosted by the Karisoke Research Center between November and December 2010 to collect data in the Volcanoes National Park for their dissertation projects. The students were given technical and financial support by the center and will continue to be supported till the end of their projects, which is later in 2011. All projects are based on the priority research themes of the Volcanoes National Park and the findings help in designing management policies for the park:

- Eric Ndayishimiye: Diversity and abundance of small mammals in the Buhanga Eco-park
- Eustrate Uzabaho: Assessment of water loss causes and implications to biodiversity conservation in the Volcanoes National Park: case of Ngezi Wetland
- Mazeyose Jean Bosco: Interplay of pollinator diversity and pollination services in Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda
- Jeannette Muterampundu: Impact of water loss on vegetation dynamics in the Volcanoes National Park
- Laure Rurangwa: Feeding ecology of Albertine endemic birds in the volcanoes national park: archer's ground robin, collared apalis, regal sunbird, rwenzori double-collared sunbird and rwenzori turaco
- Prosper Karame: Nest-building behaviour in mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) in the Volcanoes National Park

### 3. Gorilla trekking for local community members

On December 21<sup>st</sup>, for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row, the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (DFGFI) in collaboration with the management of the Volcanoes National Park organized the third "A day with the gorillas" event for local community people around the park with the global aim of gaining the good will of as many people around the park as possible towards gorillas. 30 local administrative leaders from communities surrounding the Volcanoes Park were paid for by DFGFI to trek mountain gorillas and golden monkeys in Volcanoes National Park. After the trek, the local leaders were joined by some 20 invitees from local government, conservation associations and security organs for a lunch discussion focusing on current issues regarding the park's conservation. More than 50 local leaders participated in the dialogue.



### **Jane Goodall Institute, Albertine Rift Region, Uganda**

Africa loses more than 10 million acres of forest every year - twice the world's deforestation rate. Global demand for forest and extractive industry products is growing, with competition for Africa's natural resources at an all-time high. Meanwhile population growth in Africa is faster than anywhere else, with accompanying poverty, and basic needs unmet. To be effective, forest and species conservation must address the deeply rooted human problems associated with poverty. As Jane Goodall says, "How can we even try to save the chimpanzees and forests if the people are so obviously struggling to survive?"

JGI's community-centered conservation approach provides local communities the tools needed to manage their natural resources for long-term economic gain and environmental prosperity. With increased local capacity, responsibility, and participation in the sustainable management of natural resources, communities are much better positioned to effectively preserve the natural environment and wildlife of their area.

Aiden Asekenye has been involved in a number of projects since September 2010:

- treatment/vaccination of domestic animals around Budongo Forest to avoid disease transmission to wildlife;
- Improving community livelihoods through water source infrastructure development and horticulture development;
- Establishing nurseries/woodlots to supply communities with seedlings to plant so as to reduce pressure on the forest;

- Establishment of an ecotourism site and training of local people as guides hence benefiting the community and creating an awareness of the economic potential of the forest;
- Involving youth in secondary school and pupils in primary school in community conservation awareness activities through drama, school/community cleanups, and small school projects like vegetable gardening.

These types of projects may not traditionally be considered as conservation education but the very real need to encourage communities to explore alternative resource use and employment is a key in the conservation of the Budongo Forest.

## **Uganda Wildlife Education Centre**

by David Musingo, Education Officer

The Outreach Section plays a leading role in reaching out to schools and communities who would have not visited the centre.

### Rhino Conservation Education Program.

This is an ongoing program since 2008 being implemented in Murchison Falls National Park and with support from Cincinnati Zoo, USA. There is an attempt to reintroduce rhinoceros back to their natural habitats and before this is done, there is need to sensitize the community with the emphasis on the young generation on the importance of conserving this unique species. The third phase of the program was successfully implemented this year. Primary teacher's workshop was held in Oyam District and 25 pupils were selected and attended a rhino camp.



### Animal and Education Exhibitions:

These were successfully conducted in the districts of Mbarara, Hoima Masaka, Lira, Jinja, Mbale, Fort Portal, Bushenyi and Kampala (Buganda Tourism Expo and Lugogo National Trade show). A total of 180,000 people were directly reached and about 1,500,000 indirectly reached through mass media, posters, brochure and town drives with Conservation Education messages.

### Community sensitization workshops/ meetings.

Workshops and meetings were held on conservation issues: problem animals, bushmeat, greening, waste management and other environmental issues in Buyaga County in Kibale District, Nakiwogo, Seeta and Lutembe in Wakiso District and Minakulu in Oyam District. Through this approach the community vigilance is on the rise gauging from the number of reported cases of problem, rescued animals and the positive responses from radio programs.

### Outreach to schools

Special school visits include live animals like snakes and tortoises and Wildlife documentaries are also shown. This has proved to be captivating to the pupils/students and hence enhancing learning. A total of 15 schools were engaged in the special program.

A climate change workshop for twenty five primary and secondary teachers was held in conjunction with Elize de Jager, the head of Curriculum Development at the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa. The National Zoological Gardens donated a global warming cartoon story, written and illustrated by Mr. Thomas Labuschagne, graphic designer of the NZG. Mr. Matthew van Lierop from Project 90 x 2030 donated a set of four different climate change booklets for each teacher.



## Lola Ya bonobo Sanctuary, Democratic Republic of the Congo

By Pierrot Mbonzo, Education Coordinator

### Kindness Clubs

Kindness Clubs for nature have been created in many primary and secondary schools. The aim of that special program is to help children to like and respect animals and their habitat. In December 2010, a green day was organized at the Bonobo sanctuary with two clubs, named *Taureau* (bull) and *Caméléon* (chameleon).

That activity had two parts:

-The visit to bonobos in the forest: during the visit one of the educators gave information regarding the life of bonobos. The children were very fascinated by the bonobos' play.

-The drawing of bonobos in the forest: after the visit, members of those two clubs were invited to draw a bonobo playing in the forest and a gift was given for the two best drawings.

-The gift from children: after the activity, members of these two clubs decided to give a gift of bananas to the bonobos.

### School visits

Each week, the education department of Lola Yabonobo Sanctuary organizes two school visits. It is a good occasion for children to see bonobos and the forest, to know them and to learn the importance of protecting nature.

## Two Oceans Aquarium, South Africa

Young Biologist Course, sponsored by De Beers Marine – September school holidays

160 applications were received from 40 high school Life Science learners. 54 candidates were selected, no more than 2 per school and each agreed to the minimum of thirty hours voluntary service to the aquarium after the completion of the course. The first three days were dedicated to theory and introduced candidates to a wide range of topics in marine biology, but focused mainly on aspects specific to the two aquarium displays at which they would do volunteer work, being the Touch pool and Microscope.



The second half of the course was a camp at Soetwater Environmental Centre. This was intended to provide a more practical approach to the theory that had been done.

Some enrichment activities included:

A beach walk on the first afternoon to look at Sandy shore Ecology and Archaeological evidence of stone-age inhabitants in the area; a hike to the top of Slangkop where an old gun emplacement, Fynbos and fantastic views were to be found; a snorkelling activity, for those who were prepared to brave the very cold water ... and, a few hours exploring the local rocky shore at low tide to find more examples of the animals and plants they learnt about in the theory section.

### Environmental Education Overberg Outreach - December 2010

The Two Oceans Aquarium, Cape Nature and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEADP) have developed a W Cape rural education outreach partnership. It is based upon the principles that:

- Many rural schools are under-resourced and do not benefit from the facilities offered by the Two Oceans Aquarium.
- Transport costs to the Two Oceans Aquarium are exorbitantly high
- Taking live animals to the rural schools in a custom designed vehicle makes quality education possible.

The “Underwater Wonders” lesson seeks to move children from the familiar (animals seen in any local rock pool- anemones, starfish and urchins) to less familiar details of these animals. This would also include the introduction of local environmental issues, in particular, the concepts of fishing bag limits, fish size limits, the requirement to have an angling licence and the plight of sharks all over the world.



Each lesson required lots of interaction from the participants- answering questions, touching the animals, once shown how to, and providing insight as to what was observed. There was a strong emphasis on the pupils taking the exploration further if they visited any beaches during the holiday- also encouragement to share the information with friends and family. It was hoped that a better understanding of the animals would lead to a greater respect for them and others.

## uShaka Sea World

### World Animal Day

At the Ed4PAAZAB meeting in March 2010 a decision was taken to encourage all zoo and aquarium facilities to host celebrations for World Animal Day, historically a day used by animal rights groups to highlight animal welfare issues and discourage animals in captivity. We took the decision to celebrate animals in captivity and highlight the behind the scenes work to ensure the best habitat, nutrition and enrichment requirements. This was done at Johannesburg Zoo, the South African National Zoological Gardens and uShaka Sea World.



World Animal Day celebrations happened throughout Sea World and in Dangerous Creatures from 7 to 9 October. The theme chosen was care of pets, focusing on needs of exotic pets and the enrichment programmes the staff undertakes throughout Sea World. The Seal Team undertook rostered daily enrichment activities at the Seal Stadium which were enthusiastically received by the public. The Dangerous Creatures staff contributed greatly by enabling a number of animal interactions. A pamphlet on “Best Bets for Pets” was developed and distributed in

the aquarium and at Dangerous Creatures and story boards on exotic pet care and explaining enrichment were distributed throughout Sea World and in Dangerous Creatures.



### African Penguin Awareness Day

We celebrated African Penguin Awareness Day from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October with a new display and bunting at the penguin rookery, bookmarks for the guests, a button badge for the staff and the temporary penguin photo board. The Guest Relations Guides helped children to colour in penguin masks and we organised for Jean Deysel, a Sharks Rugby Player (who also wears the penguins’ colours) to meet the public on the Saturday. Due to

the major decline in numbers of this species, uShaka Sea World has pledged to highlight the African Penguin at each of the key Environmental Days celebrated during 2011.

### South African Marine Week

Marine Week was celebrated from 13 to 18 October. The National Department of Environmental Affairs sponsored a number of school visits to Two Oceans Aquarium and uShaka Sea World.

At uShaka Sea World a series of monthly boards focusing on different themes for the International Year of Biodiversity were distributed through the aquarium and used as clues for a fun worksheet for children that contributed to the building of a large jigsaw puzzle.

Each year we run a competition for the best poem or play submitted by the 100 schools visited by our NPC CIMPOR Sea World Outreach Programme for disadvantaged communities. The finalists give their presentations to a hard-to-please audience from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and never cease to surprise us with the quality of and thought behind each poem or play and always highlighting a conservation issue and action that can be taken for the marine environment.

### SASSI

The Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) launched major changes to the consumer pocket cards as a consequence of more robust assessments of each of the common fisheries, including aquaculture for the first time. The uShaka Sea World scientists contributed most of the information for more than half of the species. The launch coincided with the national screening of the film “The End of the Line” and presentations across the country by Charles Clover, the author of the book.

## **Johannesburg Zoo**

### Biodiversity Events

The Education team arranged Arbor Day on Friday, 3 September. Traditionally the day is well attended with a few thousand learners but due to the teacher strike action, we could only confirm 220 learners. As the day progressed a larger number of young learners (3-7 years of age) arrived at the Zoo and also participated in the event. Stakeholders that attended this day were Sci-bona; Trees and Food for Africa, Grow a tree; Johannesburg City Parks, Rand Water and Johannesburg Water. The focus was on trees, water, animals that need trees and science and trees. We were honoured to receive Councillor Mfikoe and her office staff on this day.



The Education Department with assistance from the Animal Department interns participated in the ‘Yebo Gogga’ (creepy crawly) exhibition organized by the Zoology Department of the University of the Witwatersrand. The theme was biodiversity and the Zoo exhibited on cranes and their challenges. Biofacts (stuffed cranes) were used to illustrate their interaction with the visitors. “Yebo Gogga” was traditionally an insect exhibit but evolved to include a wider range of biodiversity.



Marine Week and Animal Day were celebrated with school activities. Presentations were done on the challenges that face marine animals and endangered animals, art activities and tours to various animal enclosures were included.

A bat evening was arranged for 27 November. The bat interest group did a presentation and a tour in the Zoo to see the bats living in the Zoo. They recorded the sounds made by bats and showed three of the species living in the Zoo.

#### Education Initiatives

The Education section presented a classification workshop to high school (senior) learners aged 16 years of age. Classification included vertebrates and invertebrates. This was an involved lesson as invertebrates have always been a challenge to represent. The Zoo received some posters and models of intestinal worms and some additional information from the Zoology Department at the Witwatersrand University to use for the presentation.

The zoo runs a monthly youth club meeting in 2 age groups. The Honey Badgers are aged from 7-13 and the BEMAD (Behaviour Enrichment Make A Difference) club from 14 – 19. They do various activities in the zoo, mostly around behaviour and environment enrichment projects.

The Education Department presented a holiday programme from 13 – 23 December. Cheetah Outreach participated in the holiday programme and did presentations and activities on cheetah and wild dog – the programme was marketed as ‘Carnivore Critters’. Cheetah Outreach is situated in the Cape. Their main purpose is to conserve cheetah and to promote and breed with Anatolian dogs.

#### **South African Marine and Coastal Educators Network National Conference**

January 2011

This travelling conference took place from Alexander Bay to surrounding sites. This was the first time that the Northern Cape hosted the conference in 20 years. 60 participants from 40 different organisations attended. This area is not highly populated but is the centre of diamond mines, the Richtersveld National Park (whose land rights have been given back to the community as a result of forced removals) jointly managed by National Parks and the Richtersveld communities, the last refuge of the Nama people, small-scale commercial fishing as well as coastal and wetland biodiversity. The theme was “Hilltop to Coast – Sustain to Gain”. Although this involved a fair amount of travelling, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity for the participants as many of the areas visited have highly restricted access for security purposes.

Bianca Engel of Two Oceans Aquarium is the Chair of the National steering committee and was accompanied by another two Education staff. uShaka Sea World and the National Zoo were able to fund one representative each. During the week a number of presentations were given by participants on education programmes and lessons given to schools.

Prepared by Jone Porter