

FALL 2021 QUARTERLY REPORT

AWARDS DINNER 2021

Conservation
Development
in Africa

12



IUU Fishing &
U.S. National
Security

16



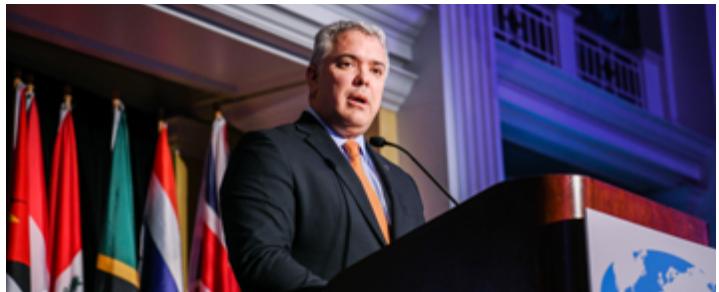
Carbon and
Louisiana's
Coastal Forests

22



Cheetahs Return
to Mozambique

49



ICCF Celebrates U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus 20-Year Anniversary; Announces Historic Conservation Initiatives in Angola and Colombia

ICCF held its annual awards dinner on Monday, September 20, 2021, at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel in Washington, D.C.

ABOVE President Iván Duque Márquez of Colombia



Foreign dignitaries, Members of Congress, and global business leaders gathered to celebrate achievements in international conservation.

Keynote speakers included:

- House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
- CEO of Global Environment Facility Carlos Manuel Rodriguez
- Chairman of Mars, Inc. Frank Mars

Awards were presented to:

- President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of Angola
- President Iván Duque Márquez of Colombia
- Rob and Melani Walton of the Rob and Melani Walton Foundation

ANGOLA

THE ICCF CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD



ABOVE President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of the Republic of Angola

LEFT Melani Walton, Rob Walton, Senator Rob Portman (R-OH), and Senator Chris Coons (D-DE), during the opening ceremony at the ICCF Awards Dinner.



President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of the Republic of Angola - introduced by Congressman Jeff Fortenberry - was presented with the Conservation Leadership Award for his outstanding leadership in securing national parks and protected areas in Angola for the benefit of wildlife and communities.



When we protect, preserve, and enhance that which is beautiful, when we embrace the idea that no person or thing should be thrown away--that's the ethos of conservation. It's about human dignity, preservation of precious ecosystems, sustainable economic regeneration, people and place, living landscapes. It's why we passed the Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals Act (the DELTA Act). It's why we gathered at this year's ICCF Gala. It's why we honored Angolan President João Lourenço for putting the conservation ethos in action in the pristine Okavango Delta."

-- Congressman Jeff Fortenberry
Co-Chair, International Conservation Caucus

REHABILITATING, MANAGING, AND FINANCING ANGOLA'S NATIONAL PARKS

The Government of Angola signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with conservation organization African Parks to develop and enter into a significant 20-year management agreement for the rehabilitation, management, and financing of Luengue-Luiana and Mavinga National Parks. The signing of the MoU was conducted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Tete António, and by Mr. Peter Fearnhead, CEO of African Parks, in the presence of H.E. Mr. João Lourenço, President of Angola. The agreement was facilitated by the ICCF Group, which serves



as the Coordinator of Multi-Sector Conservation and Development Investments in the southeast of Angola.

President Lourenço also announced that Angola will join with Gabon and Costa Rica in calling for a new global agreement to prevent and combat wildlife crime, in the form of a fourth protocol under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The proposed Protocol would sit under the international criminal law framework, alongside agreements against human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms - signifying global recognition of the devastating scale, nature, and consequences of wildlife crime.





AWARD

THE ICCF TEDDY ROOSEVELT® INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION AWARD

President Iván Duque Márquez of the Republic of Colombia - introduced by Sen. Chris Coons - was presented with the ICCF Teddy Roosevelt® International Conservation Award for his leadership in establishing significant new and expanded national parks and his efforts to expand renewable energy, promote sustainability, and protect biodiversity in Colombia.



I was honored to present the ICCF Teddy Roosevelt® International Conservation Award to President Duque, a leader who shares my passion for the environment and is fighting both for the climate and the people of Colombia. Last month, I visited Chiribiquete National Park and witnessed firsthand the beauty of Colombia, the importance of fighting deforestation, and the challenges to defending the Amazon. President Duque's outstanding leadership in conservation policy is commendable, and I look forward to continuing to partner with him and ICCF to accomplish our shared conservation and climate goals."

**-- U.S. Senator Chris Coons (D-DE)
Co-Chair, International Conservation Caucus**

LEFT President Iván Duque Márquez of Colombia

BELOW U.S. Senator Chris Coons (D-DE), International Conservation Caucus Co-Chair





PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

A FIVE-YEAR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THE CREATION AND EXPANSION OF PROTECTED AREAS IN COLOMBIA

Recognizing the extraordinary biodiversity of Colombia, the exceptional work that Colombia has done to protect its natural and cultural heritage, and especially the visionary ambition of H.E Iván Duque Márquez to expand the national protected area network,





Rainforest Trust announced a five-year commitment of \$15,000,000 USD to support the creation and expansion of protected areas in Colombia.

Rainforest Trust is actively working in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, National Natural Parks of Colombia, and ICCF on the first three proposals for national natural park expansion and hopes to approve one or more and begin funding shortly.

President Duque's national and global leadership as a member of the High Ambition Coalition is helping to show the world that we can protect 30% of Earth's lands and seas by 2030.





AWARD

ICCF LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Senator Rob Portman presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to philanthropists Melani and Rob Walton for their longtime leadership in promoting wildlife conservation and sustainability around the globe through the Rob and Melani Walton Foundation.



We must act quickly, and take smart steps to lift up local communities and conserve nature. That also means we need more allies and more advocates around the world to ensure that our lands and oceans can survive and thrive for generations to come.”

-- Melani and Rob Walton

ABOVE Senator Rob Portman (R-OH)

LEFT Rob and Melani Walton

REDEFINING THE CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT AGENDA IN AFRICA

On September 21, 2021, the ICCF Group and the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) held a briefing at the House of Sweden in Washington, DC to deliberate on the dangers of overreliance on tourism as the only investment opportunity in Africa's conservation landscapes, and to explore diversification of investments in Africa. The panel and audience were drawn from conservation leaders from the government, non-governmental, and private sectors.



Moderated by Mr. Edwin Tambara, the Director of Global Leadership at AWF, panelists included Hon. Kgoberego Nkawana, Member of Parliament from Botswana and Co-Chair of the Botswana Conservation Parliamentary Caucus (BOCOPAC), Ms. Andrea Heydlauff, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer at African Parks, and Mr. Jimmiel Mandima, Vice President of Global Programs at International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). Additionally, guest speakers included The Right Honourable Chris Grayling, Member of Parliament from the United Kingdom, Senator Ronan Dantec,

Member of the French National Assembly, Congressman Jack Kingston, Former Member of the US Congress, and Fred Kumah, Vice President of External Affairs at AWF.

Opening the discussion, Mr. Tambara set the stage for the conversation by highlighting the need to sustain livelihoods and develop economies that can truly withstand all future scenarios

that range from disease events such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to natural disasters and the negative impacts from climate change. Before introducing the panelists, Mr. Tambara



ABOVE Hon. Wynter Mmolotsi, Botswana Caucus Co-Chair

emphasized to the audience that as opposed to dwelling on what had been endured over the past 18 months, the panelists' discussions were designed to be positive and forward-looking, examining the current status of conservation and articulating priorities on how to build back better.

Hon. Kgoberego Nkawana was clear in his message about the importance for African governments to establish within policy how to best allow communities to benefit from tourism and particularly engage their local populations as critical stakeholders in conservation matters, thereby promoting local tourism.

Mr. Mandima advocated for the prioritization of support to conservation efforts by both governments and NGOs, even as they continue to grapple with the COVID-19 crisis, stating,





cutting down on support for African conservation could reverse the gains made. What agencies behind conservation need is political and public will, the right actors, and exploration of different finance models.”

Lastly, Ms. Heydlauff reiterated the important role financing plays in protected areas, not just during emergencies, but in making perpetual commitments to ensure wildlife economies are strengthened, and in putting measures in place to ensure diversification in conservation financing. She referred to this as resilient financing management.

Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling and Senator Ronan Dantec provided remarks regarding their respective governments’ support for conservation in Africa and priorities they envision the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on International Conservation in the British Parliament and the Conservation Caucus in the French Senate will pursue. Congressman Kingston,

previously a member of the International Conservation Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives, applauded the caucus model, emphasizing that it guarantees a nexus between USG agencies, global policymakers, African experts, diplomats, business leaders, and nonprofit professionals invested in conservation matters, a necessary interaction in the process of building back better.

ABOVE Andrea Heydlauff, African Parks, and Hon. Kgoberego Nkawana, Botswana Caucus Co-Chair





AMAZON CONSERVATION

PATHWAYS FOR CONSERVATION OF ECOSYSTEMS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES IN THE AMAZON

The ICCF Group convened a panel to explore the importance of the Amazon, its bioeconomy, and the legislative perspective on Amazon conservation. The panel was introduced by parliamentarians from Amazon-region

countries reflecting on the key challenges they have observed: Honorable Jennifer Kristin Arias Falla, Member of Colombian Camara of Representatives and Speaker of the House; Honorable Carlos Ardila Member of Colombian Camara of Representatives; Honorable Nelsinho Trad, Member of Brazilian Senate, Chair of Foreign Relations Committee; and Honorable Margot Palacios Huamán, Member of Peruvian Congress.



Keynote speakers included: Ana María González, World Bank Senior Environment Specialist, Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program Coordinator; Enrique Ortiz, Andes Amazon Fund; and Avril Benchimol, Senior Financial Specialist, Global Environment Facility (GEF).

ABOVE Nelsinho Trad, Member of Brazilian Senate, Chair of Foreign Relations Committee; Carlos Ardila, Member of Colombian Camara de Representatives; and Margot Palacios Huamán, Member of Peruvian Congress

ADDRESSING IUU FISHING AS A NATIONAL SECURITY IMPERATIVE

 On September 21, 2021, the Oceans Caucus Foundation hosted a Ministerial Roundtable on illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The lunch opened with comments from Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI), Senator Dan Sullivan (AK), and Representative Steve Cohen (TN-09), and featured an open and honest dialogue between international and American stakeholders. Panelists included representatives from the Republic of Gabon, the Republic of Indonesia, the United States Coast Guard, and subject-matter experts from the Allen Institute for AI and World Wildlife Fund.

IUU fishing is an increasingly urgent issue that threatens global ecosystems and communities around the world. In 2020, the U.S. Coast Guard asserted that IUU fishing had replaced piracy as the leading global maritime security threat. These depletions of global fish stocks, driven in no small part by IUU fishing, threaten to foment geopolitical conflict, exacerbate criminal human rights abuses, damage coastal and developing countries' economies, and further international

food insecurity. IUU fishing is a complex issue involving different governments, institutions, and non-state actors, and combatting it requires a robust network of collaborative entities. Still, domestic and international efforts do continue to grow, as a result of increased interest from Congress, international capacity-building, and the rise of technological advances.

Topics discussed by the panels included the prioritization of IUU fishing within

RIGHT U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Oceans Caucus Co-Chair





the U.S. national security strategy, the role of technology in enforcement and monitoring, and the advantages of approaching IUU fishing in a holistic, all-of-government manner. Audience members were drawn from conservation leaders in government, non-governmental, and private sectors.

MARINE GOVERNANCE

IMPLEMENTING THE BLUE CHARTER:

TARGETED GUIDANCE FOR LEGISLATORS ON GREATER ENGAGEMENT

The ICCF Group hosted a Roundtable on the Commonwealth Blue Charter with Members of Parliament from Dominica, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and the United Kingdom on September 20th, 2021.

The meeting was facilitated by the Commonwealth Secretariat, whose representatives Fracisca Pretorius and Jeff Ardron gave a briefing on the Blue Charter and its action groups and answered questions in a facilitated discussion to provide targeted guidance for legislators on greater engagement.

The dialogue centered on the role of legislators in implementing the Blue Charter and how the ICCF Group can support inter-parliamentary engagement on the Blue Charter, particularly on the topics of mangrove conservation, marine protected areas designation and management aligned with thirty-by-thirty

goals, and coral reef restoration. Participants agreed there was little awareness of the Blue Charter amongst decision-makers, and greater engagement could facilitate its implementation. Suggestions included briefings for delegates before ICCF-sponsored field missions to member countries that are signatories, in order to connect bilaterally on collaboration through action groups. Hon. Mussa Azzan Zungu from Tanzania raised the suggestion of including sea mining in an action group and promoting transboundary dialogue on this issue, and Stanley Johnson from the UK noted that marine noise should also be incorporated into an action group.

A focus on the siloed implementation of Blue Charter projects through Ministries and Civil Service as opposed to involving legislative members was also raised by several delegates. The roundtable participants discussed the potential for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to host briefings for its members to help raise



their awareness and network on these issues. The roundtable concluded by looking forward to the UNFCCC Climate Conference of the Parties (CoP) to be held in November, and suggested a larger panel discussion on the Blue Charter with even more countries during the Conference. The roundtable was held in the context of a large gathering of parliamentary conservation caucuses in Washington, DC for the 2021 ICCF U.S. Congressional International Conservation Leadership Awards Dinner, and was supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded project, “Facilitating Dialogue and Strengthening Transboundary Cooperation With Legislators To Improve Marine Governance” in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

ABOVE Man planting mangrove seedling in a wet field



SPECIAL EVENT

ICCF CELEBRATES NEW AND EXISTING CONSERVATION CAUCUSES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The ICCF Group hosted a special networking event for the global network of conservation caucuses to celebrate and announce new conservation caucuses supported by the ICCF Group and facilitate inter-parliamentary exchanges.



This dinner and subsequent reception were opened with remarks by the Honorable John Tanner, ICCF Chairman, on the founding of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus, followed by keynote remarks by Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which has supported the ICCF Group’s work to help establish conservation caucuses around the world.

The event recognized the recent launch of the French Bicameral Conservation Caucus, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Conservation in the UK House of Commons and House of Lords, the Kaukus Kelautan (Oceans Caucus) in the People's Representative Council of Indonesia, the new Conservation Parliamentary Caucus in the National Assembly of Botswana, and legislative delegations from Brazil, the Eastern Caribbean, Mongolia, and Tanzania, with existing caucus delegates from Colombia, Mexico, Mozambique, and Kenya.

Members of the newly formed conservation caucuses gave brief remarks regarding their priority conservation issues and commitment to leveraging their positions as decision-makers to address environmental issues ranging from plastics pollution to extractive industry externalities. The dinner provided an important platform for members of potential, new, and existing conservation caucuses to discuss the variance in caucus

structure and function at the national levels, and to connect on common environmental initiatives to build political will on the international scale. The event was supported by the GEF projects “Advancing Conservation in the Eastern Caribbean” and “Facilitating Dialogue and Strengthening Trans-boundary Cooperation With Legislators To Improve Marine Governance” in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

ABOVE Hon. John Tanner, ICCF Chairman and International Conservation Caucus Co-Founder

LOUISIANA'S COASTAL FOREST: CARBON SINK OR CARBON SOURCE?

THERE'S STILL TIME TO DECIDE

The Mississippi River Watershed—the fourth largest watershed in the world that includes all or parts of 32 states and two Canadian provinces—acts as a drain for roughly 40% of the continental United States.

Many of the Mississippi Delta's environmental problems are well-documented, such as the omnipresent "dead zone" caused by nutrient runoff from upstream sources, as well as the accelerated coastal erosion that has averaged the size of a football field every hour for the last 35 years. What has failed to capture national attention, though, has been the alarming rate of deterioration of a vital coastal forest ecosystem unique to southern Louisiana.

Over one million acres comprise this unique habitat, which serves as one of the final stretches of land connected to the watershed before it deposits into the Gulf of Mexico. The coastal forest is a delicately balanced system that consists of soils historically subjected to seasonal flooding from the Mississippi River and its tributaries, as well as tidal influence from the Gulf of Mexico. This hydrologic regime provided alternating periods of drying followed by several months of

seasonal flooding on an annual basis.

The net result of these hydrologic patterns over thousands of years was an environment uniquely adapted for bald cypress and water tupelo trees to establish and thrive. These forests in turn deliver a host of positive environmental and economic benefits, including: (i) carbon sequestration; (ii) floodwater retention; (iii) hurricane and storm surge buffering; (iv) nutrient and pollutant filtration from stormwater runoff; (v)



ABOVE Live oak trees are massive and gnarled, with branches reaching to the ground.

wildlife habitat; (vi) erosion prevention; (vii) outdoor recreation and tourism; and (viii) commercial resources, such as wild alligators, crawfish, and timber.

Indeed, the coastal forest is rapidly becoming Louisiana's last line of defense for much of the southeastern region of the state. Hurricane Ida's recent storm surge and backwater flooding

into many of Louisiana's low-lying areas demonstrated the need for drastic investment to promote the resilience of this ecosystem. Not only is the coastal forest strategically situated to provide a critical buffer against hurricanes, but it also helps diffuse tidal surges while providing crucial storage areas for accompanying floodwaters.

Unfortunately, over the past 125 years, many changes occurred throughout the lower Mississippi River Delta that have altered the historic hydrologic patterns necessary to sustain this unique forest, including:

- Construction of levees along the Mississippi River and dams/water control structures on three of its major distributaries;
- Construction of a ground-level highway and a railroad from Houston to New Orleans, which closed off many of the natural drains necessary for efficient movement of water through this region to the Gulf of Mexico;
- Water diversion and flood control projects that altered natural flood patterns and sediment dispersal;
- Forced drainage projects for development that reduced the size of flood retention basins and accelerated delivery of waters to low-lying areas like the coastal forest;
- Increased agricultural, industrial, and residential activities upstream, leading to higher nutrient and contaminant loads from these sources;
- Erosion of marsh lands and creation of man-made navigation channels, leading to increased saltwater intrusion; and

- Natural and man-made subsidence and sea level rise.

As a result of these changes, the coastal forest has experienced a rapid decline in health and vigor, with at least 50% of the forest either dead or dying.



RUDY SPARKS, WHO MANAGES ROUGHLY 150,000 ACRES OF THE COASTAL FOREST FOR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS IN SOUTH LOUISIANA, HAS WITNESSED THIS DOWNTURN OVER HIS 40+ YEARS SERVING IN THAT ROLE.



This decline was first observed some 50 years ago, but it has rapidly intensified over the last decade as the cumulative effects of these changes are taking their toll. The coastal forest historically supported a thriving cypress timber industry, and from 1870 to 1930, approximately 15 sawmills were established in this region. These sawmills employed thousands of local workers and exported millions of board feet of cypress lumber to the East Coast and Texas for home and commercial construction. Today, there are no cypress sawmills operating in the area, and little, if any, timber is harvested as this forest continues to deteriorate.”

Not only does the decline of this forest equate to a total loss of the benefits listed above, but failure to take immediate action could have significant global consequences related to climate change. Estimates show that the coastal forest of south Louisiana currently stores over 17 million tons of carbon, not

including additional carbon stored in the soil. A recent study from North Carolina State University found that drowned coastal forests are major sources of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, with the potential of released gases to grow exponentially over the next half century if left unaddressed.



[It's] kind of like measuring the last breath of these forests," says Marcelo Ardon, an ecosystems ecologist and biogeochemist at N.C. State. "But these trees are important to overall emissions." Indeed, the study's results indicate that these "ghost forests" are currently increasing the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere by at least 25%. Without intervention, the vast majority of Louisiana's coastal forest is projected to convert to open water areas by the end of this century.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION POTENTIAL

The Biden Administration and Congress have highlighted carbon sequestration as a potential tool in the overall strategy for combating climate change.

Recently introduced legislation focuses on the need for more trees and better forest management to increase the amount of carbon sequestered in these environments.

Regenerative farming practices have also caught on, aimed at sequestering more carbon in the soil through reduced tilling, rotation of cover crops, and better grazing management. And there is no shortage of blue carbon bills in the House and Senate seeking to capitalize on the marine environment's potential to

sequester tons of carbon from the atmosphere. Each of these solutions brings value to addressing the worst effects of climate change; however, as currently drafted, almost none of them would fully address the issues facing the coastal forest in Louisiana.

Roughly 80% of the state's coastal forest exists on privately-owned land. One group of engaged private landowners believes there is still time to stem the worst effects of losing the coastal forest, with a chance to completely revitalize much of the region.



According to Sparks,



Depending upon the overall health and vigor of the area, these forests currently sequester 0 to 2 tons of carbon per acre each year, with the potential to double those numbers in a healthy stand of forest.” But capitalizing on these opportunities will demand a comprehensive, collaborative response that marries the interests and resources of different groups, including coastal forest landowners, the federal government, and the private sector.

Fortunately, solutions already exist for improving and restoring Louisiana’s coastal forest. Some would require large water diversion projects, designed to reestablish historic hydrologic patterns that sustained this unique forest for thousands of years. However, other low resource-intensive opportunities exist to implement meaningful changes, such as the improvement of internal drainage in specific areas, amendment of hydrologic functions via pumping stations, and aerial seed deployment. Indeed, several

success stories already exist from targeted research studies utilizing these very activities, but to date there have been no large-scale efforts aimed at implementing these strategies.

This is mostly due to limited access to upfront capital, an obstructive federal permitting process, and the lack of any economic incentives, such as carbon offset credits, for private landowners to justify taking on such vast endeavors alone.



The vast majority of the coastal forest has been privately-owned over the course of 4 or 5 generations, so pride of ownership is prevalent,” Sparks says. “But hydrologic restoration, even on a small scale, is difficult—if not impossible—to implement, as no economic incentives exist, impediments to government permits are enormous and time-consuming, and associated mitigation requirements to any restorative efforts make projects of all sizes cost-prohibitive.”

Sparks believes that implementing these strategies will require



federal agencies to revisit their policies and adjust them for addressing climate change, especially at the Army Corps of Engineers:



The Corps has been extremely slow to approve even the simplest permit.

We are often told that before we can address the issues on our property, we must first commit to mitigating any impacts elsewhere. So we're having to mitigate before we can mitigate. And the irony is that many of the issues we're facing were caused by the Corps' flood control projects dating back to the 1920s." Now, with so much national and global attention on climate change mitigation solutions, Sparks and other private landowners are hoping there will be a renewed political will to remove red tape and put real resources behind these simple solutions.

Notably, policymakers' current focus on "blue carbon ecosystems" provides another unique opportunity to protect this beleaguered forest. Recognizing their carbon sequestration potential, bills in both Houses of Congress seek to protect and rehabilitate "blue carbon

ecosystems," including mangroves, tidal marshes, seagrasses, kelp forests, and other coastal wetlands. These bills provide a prime opportunity to preserve and rejuvenate Louisiana's coastal forest; they are designed in part to fund and cut red tape relating to protecting coastal



wetlands.

Certain aspects of this legislation may not, however, extend fully to the Louisiana coastal forest. Due to the construction of railroads and ground-level highways, in addition to the Army Corps' construction of the levee system, much of this coastal forest is no longer subject to tidal influence, though

they were tidally influenced prior to all of these man-made obstacles. In July, Rep. Garret Graves successfully introduced an amendment during the House Natural Resources Committee mark-up of H.R. 3764, the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act, to specifically include Louisiana's coastal forest within proposed "blue carbon" programs.

The coastal forest of south Louisiana took several millennia to evolve and establish itself as a truly unique ecosystem. It is imperative that this forest's plight finally reach a national audience and receive the necessary support to conserve and restore it. Failure to protect this threatened region will have enormous consequences that could resonate far beyond these majestic swamps.

BELOW Golden light in the Louisiana Bayou with moss covered trees.





WILDLIFE CRIME

ANGOLA JOINS CALL FOR A NEW GLOBAL AGREEMENT TO PREVENT AND COMBAT WILDLIFE CRIME

In response to the devastating impact of wildlife crime on the security of communities, ecosystems, and wildlife, the President of Angola has announced that Angola will join with Gabon and Costa Rica in calling for a new international agreement to prevent and combat wildlife crime.

The Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime (EWC) congratulated President João Lourenço on his leadership and farsightedness, in calling for a fourth protocol on wildlife crime under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

The proposed protocol against wildlife trafficking would sit under the international criminal law framework, alongside agreements against human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms, signifying global recognition of the devastating scale, nature, and consequences of wildlife crime.

The World Bank estimates the global illegal logging, fishing, and wildlife trade to be valued at \$1-2 trillion a year. Governments in source countries are believed to lose an estimated \$7-12 billion in potential fiscal revenues each year to the illegal trade, and 1.7 million undiscovered viruses are thought to exist in wild animals, about half of which could spill over to people.

In response to the President’s statement, John Scanlon AO, Chair of EWC, commended his extraordinary environmental leadership:



Angola has some of the richest and most diverse wildlife resources of any country in Africa, with iconic species, unique biological diversity and landscapes. The illicit trafficking of wildlife threatens to strip this beautiful country, and many others, of these precious sovereign resources, and of the opportunity for its people to prosper from their sustainable use. EWC stands ready to support Angola, Costa Rica and Gabon in their visionary endeavor and encourages all States to heed their call.”

“Today's announcement from H.E. João Lourenço proves once again Angola’s fierce commitment to nature conservation. The illicit trafficking of wildlife is causing economic, security, health and social impacts that will be felt for generations to come, if brave leaders all over the world do not act now,” added Susan Herman Lylis, Executive Vice President of the ICCF Group.

The announcement was made at the

ICCF U.S. Congressional International Conservation Leadership Awards Dinner, which was held in Washington D.C. September 20th. The Government of Angola also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with conservation organisation African Parks to develop and enter into a 20-year management agreement for the rehabilitation, management, and financing of Luengue Luiana and Mavinga National Parks.

Angola has been committed to fighting illicit wildlife trafficking for over a decade, working with international partners to strengthen its legal system, increase investigation and prosecution capacity, and end the ivory trade.



BOTSWANA CAUCUS VISITS OKAVANGO DELTA, LAUNCHES STRATEGIC PLAN

From August 27th-29th, 2021, in collaboration with the National Assembly of Botswana and with support from the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project, the ICCF Group facilitated a field visit for eight Members of Parliament from Botswana to the Okavango Delta to provide them with a first-hand understanding of the true meaning of conservation.



Part of the itinerary included the formal launch of the Strategic Plan (2021-2026) for the Botswana Conservation Parliamentary Caucus (BOCOPAC), held in Maun, Botswana.

On August 28th, 2021, Honorable Wynter Mmolotsi, Co-Chair of the BOCOPAC, presented the Strategic Plan (2021-2026) to an audience composed of his fellow parliamentarians, U.S. Congressional staffers, civil society organizations, research institutions, and the private sector. The Plan was developed by the leadership of the BOCOPAC to articulate key issues and objectives to

focus on in the next five years to guide caucus members, the secretariat, and any collaborators. The involvement of stakeholders at the launch provided an opportunity for commentary and suggestions on how the public can engage the National Assembly of Botswana, through the caucus, in that time period.

Hon. Mmolotsi highlighted that the



Strategic Plan will contribute to an improved understanding of policy and legislation among parliamentarians, and to the sustainable development of Botswana through conservation and wise use of various environmental resources. He was clear in his message that the Plan will be an adaptable document, providing guidance for the BOCOPAC and its collaborators, being updated from time to time to take into account the evolving developments at various levels.

Immediately following the launch of the Strategic Plan, the delegation of

eight Members of Parliament ventured north to the Okavango Delta, staying within the Moremi Game Reserve. The goal of this visit was for the parliamentarians to see first-hand the innovative ways in which investment in the region is providing invaluable support to biodiversity conservation and management efforts within the Okavango watershed. They were able to see ongoing ecotourism efforts that are successfully strengthening the ability of local people and organizations to manage and conserve species, habitats, and ecological processes.

LEFT Dr. Phenyio Butale addresses the audience

ABOVE Hon. Wynter Mmolotsi, Botswana Caucus Co-Chair



THE ROLE OF CORRUPTION IN ENABLING WILDLIFE AND FOREST CRIME IN MALAWI

On July 12th, 2021, the ICCF Group, in partnership with the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT), held the launch of a 60-page report that analysed the role of corruption in enabling wildlife and forest crime in Malawi. The report was commissioned by the Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus (MPCC) and funded by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

During the launch, Martha Chizuma, the newly appointed Director-General of Malawi's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), vowed to target corruption linked with illegal trade in wildlife and forest products, stating,



wildlife and forest crime have the hallmarks of any other organised criminal activity - money laundering, violence, and corruption. Persons responsible for corrupting public officers will be pursued vigorously and the proceeds of their crimes will be confiscated. Public officers involved in this illicit trade will not be spared either.” She continued, “Combating corruption in these sectors is a key priority during my tenure. We cannot be bystanders to the destruction of our nation’s natural heritage, upon which we rely for our prosperity and our very survival. We all have a moral duty to do what we can in whatever walk of life we find ourselves in.”

Hon. Werani Chilenga, Co-Chair of the Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus and Chair of the Natural Resources Parliamentary Committee, said,



Corruption is a serious crime, and those individuals who don’t resist the temptation of ‘dirty money’ ultimately rob from us all. We need to stamp out corruption throughout the chain, from the police officers who wave through the charcoal trucks through the roadblocks and the shipping agent who clears the container of ivory through to the court clerk who alters paperwork.”

The timing of this publication is also pertinent given current national outrage on the wider topic of corruption. Malawi slipped further down the global ranking on the Corruption Perception Index last year. In a recent address to the nation, President Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera said: “There is no Government Ministry, Department, or Agency where the culture of impunity for wastage, misappropriation, and theft is not entrenched...we cannot afford to deal with corruption selectively by focusing on the tip of the iceberg. It is the whole system that is corrupt and therefore it is the whole system we must clean up.”

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT WERE SHARED WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND THE MEDIA.



Brighton Kumchedwa, co-author of the report and Director for the Department of National Parks & Wildlife, said,



The illicit trades in products such as ivory, pangolin, and rhino horn are controlled by international organised criminal syndicates who cannot operate without the support of corrupt individuals who operate throughout the trafficking chain. Multi-agency collaboration is therefore key to disrupting such activity. We are fully committed to working together with the ACB to instigate the recommendations laid out in this report.”

THE ILLICIT CHARCOAL TRADE HAS BEEN OF PARTICULAR CONCERN, BECAUSE IT IS DRIVING MALAWI’S RATES OF DEFORESTATION TO CATASTROPHIC LEVELS.

Dr. Clement Chilima, also a co-author of the report and the Director of the Department of Forestry, added,



The Department of Forestry is similarly committed to supporting the recommendations of this report. Supply chains are increasingly controlled by illicit trafficking syndicates operating in a range of sectors. This is a fight that we, as a department, cannot win alone, and I thank the multiple government agencies, from the ACB through to the Malawi Police Service who are stepping up to help save our forests.”

The full report is available to view at www.icon.mw/corruption.



SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES: LOOKING AT TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREAS (TFCAS) IN SOUTHERN AFRICA



On July 9th, 2021 the ICCF Group held a briefing focused on Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) across Southern Africa.

Panelists for this briefing included His Excellency Onkokame Kitso Mokaila, Ambassador of the Republic of Botswana to the U.S., His Excellency Carlos dos Santos, Ambassador of the Republic of Mozambique to the U.S., Dr. Bartolomeu Soto, Regional Director-South of Peace Parks, and Dr. Nyambe Nyambe, Executive Director of the KAZA Secretariat. The session focused not only on the successes and challenges faced within TFCAs, but additionally on opportunities for investment as the region plans for a post-pandemic future.

Ambassador Mokaila opened the briefing by providing a description of transfrontier conservation areas and how they serve a necessary role to manage the shared resources that encompass the Southern African region. He emphasized that effective regional resource management is essential since wildlife do not abide by human-made borders. Ambassador

Mokaila also highlighted how the harmonization of legislation can boost the region's tourism sector by making the visa process easier for tourists to move between countries in the KAZA region. The need for the harmonization of legislative processes is necessary to make resilient and sustainable strategies for resource management.



With Mozambique currently serving as the Chair of the South African Development Community (SADC), Ambassador dos Santos stated the continued need for SADC to promote tourism, while simultaneously improving community development, as a shared kinship, heritage, and cultural linkage exists in the region.

He also expressed SADC's importance for promoting public-private partnerships and how they are generating excellent expertise. Lastly, the Ambassador stressed the importance for capacity building within the judicial system in order to ensure the legislation of the countries is upheld and the importance of training on-the-ground forces to directly combat poachers, protect wildlife, and ensure wildlife crime does not happen in the first place.

Dr. Bartolomeu Soto spoke of the tourism benefits TFCAs bring to the region, highlighting that these benefits are felt

equally across the region because TFCAs serve as a useful tool to ensure a more equitable distribution of tourism profits. He also stated that tourism helps to stimulate local entrepreneurs, improve community development, and improve stakeholder participation. To close his presentation,

Dr. Soto brought attention to the impact COVID-19 has had on the region, with the countries witnessing a 70% drop in international arrivals in 2020. He asserted there is a need to "build back better" and that innovative new tourist strategies should be pursued.

Dr. Nyambe Nyambe expanded the discussion by highlighting the added opportunities TFCAs bring to Southern African, going beyond tourism.

He used COVID-19 as an example to stress that countries must reduce the over-reliance on one industry, as the potential for another industry shock exists. He stated, "an urgent need exists to deepen and expand investment to other sectors and opportunities to attract local investment and participation

by small and medium scale players in economic activities." He highlighted the mosaic of land uses that are found within Southern Africa and its transboundary areas and what their role may be for greater economic development. The opportunities included developing and sustainably exploiting timber and non-

timber forest products, ranching to integrate livestock and wildlife systems, exploring heritage and cultural resources, implementing innovative financing mechanisms such as payment for ecosystem services and carbon trading, and continuing the conversation around hunting.

Dr. Nyambe was clear that these opportunities could greatly supplement the critical tourism industry and lead to an economy that is not only thriving, but also based on sustainable and resilient principles.

CAUCUS IMPACT

WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING KINGPIN SENTENCED TO 14 YEARS IN PRISON IN MALAWI

On September 28th, the kingpin of one of Southern Africa's most prolific wildlife trafficking syndicates was sentenced to serve 14 years in prison in Malawi.



Chinese national Yunhua Lin was the head of the ‘Lin-Zhang gang’, which has been operating out of Malawi for at least a decade.

He was arrested in August 2019 following a three-month manhunt by the authorities. He was sentenced to 14 years for dealing in rhino horn, 14 years for possession of rhino horn, and six years for

money laundering; the sentences will run concurrently, so he will serve a total of 14 years. Lin will be deported back to China on completion of the jail term.

Hon. Werani Chilenga, Co-Chair of the Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus (MPCC) and Chair of the Parliamentary Natural Resource Committee stated,



Just five years ago, anyone convicted of wildlife crime in Malawi could expect a \$50 fine and a slap on the wrist. Today, the leader of one of the region's most prolific wildlife trafficking syndicates has just been sent to jail for 14 years. This is the highest such sentence ever handed to a non-African national for wildlife crime. Let this serve as a warning to those who think they can exploit our nation's natural heritage. Congratulations go to all agencies involved - they have shown Malawi's capabilities in fighting serious organized crime.”

In January of 2018, Malawi passed an amendment bill for the National Parks and Wildlife Act that considerably stiffened penalties related to wildlife offences.

The leadership of the MPCC had been particularly active in getting this amendment passed, and part of their mandate since has included strengthening wildlife legal frameworks and ensuring proper implementation. In the past three years, the caucus has been providing oversight for the amendments’

implementation through the chairing of case review workshops across Malawi, which have been attended by the judiciary, the Inter-Agency Committee for Combating Wildlife Crime (IACCWC), and local media.

FROM OUR PARTNERS

DISCOVERY, INC. UNVEILS LARGE- SCALE BRONZE TIGER STATUE BY ARTIST SONNY BEHAN AT THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING THROUGH ITS “PROJECT CAT” CAMPAIGN TO BRING ATTENTION TO THE PLIGHT OF TIGERS IN THE WILD

Tiger Statue Unveiled Ahead of the UN General Assembly

NEW YORK, NY (Sept. 20, 2021) – Discovery, Inc., a global leader in real life entertainment, will unveil a large-scale bronze tiger statue created by acclaimed artist Sonny Behan at the United Nations (UN) building in New York to celebrate tigers and raise awareness for endangered species ahead of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly.

PHOTOS BY TESS CUNLIFFE





Discovery supports nearly six million acres of tiger habitat across India, Bhutan and Russia through its Project C.A.T. (Conserving Acres for Tigers) campaign launched in partnership with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to help protect and support the conservation of a transboundary tiger landscape that is a global priority for tiger conservation.

This key area also supports local economies, alternative livelihoods, and climate justice for the most marginalized. Discovery joined the ambitious goal of conservation groups to double the wild tiger population by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger in the Chinese Zodiac.

Discovery has a long and storied relationship with the UN that has

included programs and partnerships across platforms and campaigns, such as the development of original content about the natural world to raise awareness of the threats against wildlife; participation in the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Wild for Life campaign to mobilize Discovery's global audiences to help end illegal wildlife trade; and supporting

the UN and UNEP across a variety of other initiatives and social media efforts. Discovery's RISE initiative (Reducing Inequality and Supporting

Empowerment) also promotes the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and select initiatives across its digital platforms.



Discovery is a purpose-driven company with a strong commitment to conservation and protecting wildlife. We are proud of our partnership with UN Environment and the UN, which advances our shared mission to preserve our planet and its species. Our tiger sculpture celebrates the power of this partnership on a broad range of goals to build a better world for future generations, and, hopefully, inspires everyone who sees it to do their part," said David Zaslav, President and CEO of Discovery, Inc.



There are many threats to species in the wild, which includes habitat loss due to land degradation and transformation," said Barbara Hendrie, Director of the UN Environment Programme's Regional Office for North America. "We need to ensure the restoration of our ecosystems that have been damaged or destroyed, and to conserve those critical ecosystems that are still intact for the sake of animals, people and planet."



Wild tiger populations faced decades of decline until 2016," said Ginette Hemley, senior vice president for wildlife conservation at WWF. "We've seen populations stabilize, and even increase, in several countries since then. There is hope for the species' future, but so much more needs to be done to achieve a doubling of the global population, particularly in Southeast Asia where snaring and poaching for the illegal wildlife trade continue to keep numbers alarmingly low."





Representing the resilience of nature and humanity, 'Abhaya' (fearlessness) is a celebration of the color these animals bring to our world. In such challenging times, we can all draw inspiration from the tiger, a universal symbol of courage and strength. After a century of decline, wild tiger numbers are starting to increase. Yet, it's important to remember that threats to tigers are ever present. This is why the tiger is depicted in motion, jumping forward into the future; a future that relies so heavily on the actions we take today. I'm honored to bring one of these iconic big cats to the United Nations and hope that it will serve as a reminder of the importance of protecting and conserving, not only tigers, but all wildlife across the globe," said Sonny Behan.

Sonny, best-known for his majestic and intricate wildlife portraits and large-scale wildlife street murals featured across the globe, has a unique style of art that blends realism with abstract coloring and has quickly seen him gain prestige within urban art communities. His passion for using his creative voice to raise

awareness for important environmental and sustainability issues has also built him a reputation for being an engaged artist, driven by a desire to make an impact. As a creative ambassador, Sonny not only campaigns for endangered species, but for a range of sustainability issues that face our world today.

ALSO WITH DISCOVERY INC. :

SDG Media Zone fireside chat between Discovery talent and wildlife biologist Forrest Galante and the wildlife artist Sonny Behan

SEE "PROTECTING BIG CATS" ONLINE AT
<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k14/k14z1gd4g9>

PHOTO BY Emily Raftery



INTERNATIONAL PAPER IS ENSURING FORESTLAND STAYS FORESTED

Sustainable forestry doesn't just happen in working forests.

International Paper focuses on conserving the biodiversity and health of all forestland, including those that aren't used to make products. The company committed to

conserving and restoring one million acres of ecologically significant forestland by 2030, and works every day with environmental advocates, government agencies, and other businesses to keep forests thriving.



One example of International Paper's leadership in efforts to manage, conserve and restore forestland is exemplified through Forestland Stewards, a

conservation collaborative with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) that supports projects to restore native forests, strengthen important fish and wildlife populations, and protect watersheds — while at the same time promoting and supporting working forests in eleven states across the U.S. South.

Forestland Stewards



PHOTO BY Hollingsworth, John and Karen, USFWS



Since 2013, NFWF and International Paper have invested more than \$30 million in projects through the Forestland Stewards partnership. These investments are leveraging more than \$143 million in additional match from grantees, for a total conservation impact of more than \$173 million. These projects,

once fully implemented, will establish and enhance more than 1 million acres of native forest and wildlife habitat, improve more than 550 miles of stream habitat, and engage nearly 20,000 private landowners through outreach and technical assistance to implement forest stewardship practices.

FORESTLAND STEWARDS AWARDS GRANTS WITHIN FOUR PRIORITY LANDSCAPES THAT INCLUDE IMPORTANT FOREST AND FRESHWATER HABITATS, AND ARE CRITICAL TO IMPROVING POPULATIONS OF AT-RISK WILDLIFE:

- Coastal Plain forests of North and South Carolina
- Piney Woods of Louisiana and Texas
- Cumberland Plateau of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee
- Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley of Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee.

The strategy for restoration and enhancement in these places is guided by strategic conservation business plans, developed in

LEFT Longleaf pine cones



collaboration with resource experts and local partners with on-the-ground knowledge of conservation needs and opportunities.

Enhance Longleaf Pine Habitat Through the Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund

IP and NFWF, through their Forestland Stewards Partnership, recently awarded six grants totaling more than \$1.5 million to restore, enhance and protect longleaf pine forests within the historical longleaf pine range in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina,

South Carolina and Texas. The grants were awarded through the Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund (Fund) to projects that will leverage \$2.1 million in matching contributions for a total conservation impact of \$3.6 million.



The restoration of America’s longleaf pine forest has immeasurable ecological, economic and social value,” said Sophie Beckham, chief sustainability officer of International Paper. “Through our Forestland Stewards Partnership with NFWF, we are proud to support six of the 21 grants that will help to restore and manage thousands of acres of southeastern forestland and engage landowners in the stewardship of this important ecosystem.”

The longleaf pine ecosystem once covered more than 90 million acres across the Southeastern coastal plain and piedmont.

Today, it has been reduced to only about five percent of its historical range due to the conversion to other forest types, conversion to other land uses, and fire suppression. These six grants are expected to establish more than 2,700 new acres of longleaf pine and will enhance an additional 106,000

acres of habitat. Grantees will engage private landowners through workshops, training, and one-on-one technical assistance to restore and maintain longleaf pine habitat on their lands.



The projects will also increase and improve habitat for several at-risk species, including the red-cockaded woodpecker and gopher tortoise. These species depend on mature longleaf canopy and the open pine savannah

and understory plants that prescribed fires and other management activities implemented by these projects will help restore and maintain. Longleaf needs fire to exist.



The red-cockaded woodpecker is the only woodpecker species that creates cavities in living trees, with a preference for mature longleaf pine forests. This fire-adaptive forest, meaning it depends on periodic burning to thrive, is one of North America's most biodiverse ecosystems. The red-cockaded woodpecker is considered a keystone species because the nest cavities that they construct provide habitat for many other wildlife. The loss of these cavities can have a cascading effect on the populations of other species.

The gopher tortoise is another vital species in the longleaf pine ecosystem. It provides critical habitat for about 360 different species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates that spend all or a portion of their lives in active or abandoned gopher tortoise burrows. Gopher tortoise habitat range covers the coastal plain from South

Carolina through Florida to southeastern Louisiana and is linked closely to the longleaf pine ecosystem. Longleaf is estimated to have once covered 90 million acres across the southeast but now only includes about 4.7 million acres. The diminished habitat is a major contributor to the decline in gopher tortoise populations.

The Forestland Stewards Partnership is just one way International Paper is leading forest stewardship efforts globally as the company seeks to achieve its Vision 2030 goal to conserve and restore one million acres of ecologically significant forestland.



PEACE PARKS FOUNDATION: AFTER 60 YEARS, CHEETAHS RETURN TO MOZAMBIQUE'S MAPUTO SPECIAL RESERVE

Cheetahs once again grace the wildlife-rich plains of Maputo Special Reserve in southern Mozambique for the first time since the 1960s. Four of the threatened big cats – sourced from private game reserves in South Africa – were released safely into the 104 200ha reserve this month following a three-week acclimatisation period in bomas erected specifically for this purpose.

ABOVE Night release / Photo credit: Peace Parks Foundation

Maputo Special Reserve is managed through a partnership between Mozambique's National Administration for Conservation Areas (ANAC) and Peace Parks Foundation. They collaborated with conservation experts

Ashia Cheetah Conservation, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), and veterinary partner Mozambique Wildlife Alliance to make this landmark translocation happen.



ANAC Director-General Mateus Mutemba points out that:



We have been committed to expanding and safeguarding the precious ecological assets of Maputo Special Reserve, a region that protects the best of Mozambique's natural heritage. Through our partnership with Peace Parks, the reintroduction of cheetah is yet another historic conservation milestone in Mozambique and in the ongoing development of the reserve into a self-sustaining operation that generates revenue for the communities living in the area."

Two male cheetahs were flown in from the andBeyond Phinda Private Game Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal, whilst an adult female and her sub-adult female cub were flown from the Waterval Private Game Reserve (of which Botlierskop Game Reserves & Villas are custodians) near Kimberley in the

Northern Cape. The cheetahs were donated by Ashia, which also covered the costs of the translocation, including transportation, vaccination and the fitting of tracking collars to monitor the big cats in their new environment.

The reintroduction of the cats into Maputo Special Reserve is part of an

ambitious goal to establish a healthy metapopulation (a group of spatially separated populations of the same species which interact at some level) that contributes to the conservation of the cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), a species which has been eliminated from 90% of its range in Africa, with an estimated population of only 6,600 individuals remaining.

Since 2016, Ashia has been successfully reintroducing carefully chosen cheetahs to game reserves and national parks in southern Africa.



Reintroduction
of cheetahs into

protected areas is one of the key strategies to reduce the risk of extinction, fuelled by habitat loss and events such as persecution, prey depletion and disease,” explains Marna Smit, Director for Ashia Cheetah Conservation.



We therefore welcomed the opportunity to partner with ANAC and Peace Parks, as well as the Cheetah Range Expansion Project of the EWT, to introduce cheetah into the suitable habitat of Maputo Special Reserve.”

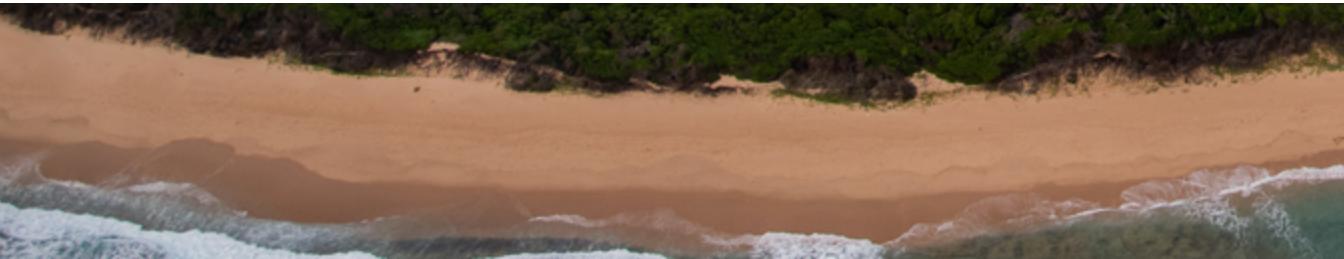




The rewilding programme is a vital component of the restoration and development of the reserve and, largely through funding support from the World Bank Mozbio Programme, almost 5,000 animals, including, buffalo, giraffe, impala, kudu, nyala, waterbuck, warthog, oribi, eland, blue wildebeest and zebra have been translocated here over the past decade. Total animal numbers are estimated at between 15,000 and 17,000 today, indicating the health of the natural ecosystems in the reserve and success in intensified management and protection activities. Under their partnership agreement, Peace Parks

Foundation and ANAC have been jointly developing the reserve and the adjoining Ponta do Ouro Partial Marine Reserve, which protect a spectacular mosaic of inland, coastal and marine components. This is one of the few places in Africa where you can see elephants and whales on the same day.

With plenty of prey and appropriate habitat in Maputo Special Reserve, the introduction of cheetah, which were extirpated from the region decades ago, was found to be suitable following a feasibility study from the EWT, which also managed the selection and



relocation of the animals to Mozambique. This operation falls under the EWT's

Cheetah Range Expansion Project.



Thanks to the efforts of ANAC and Peace Parks, there are now greater levels of ecological functionality in the protected areas of Mozambique.

Reintroducing cheetahs into safe spaces such as Maputo Special Reserve where cheetahs historically occurred, has proven to be an effective way to maximise range expansion and protect the genetic diversity of cheetahs by preventing inbreeding with relatives,” explained the EWT’s Cheetah Range Expansion Coordinator Vincent van der Merwe.

The reintroductions under the Cheetah Range Expansion Project have doubled the cheetah metapopulation from 217 animals in 48 protected areas to 478 cheetahs in 67 protected areas across

South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi. The metapopulation in this network of protected areas constitutes the only growing wild cheetah population worldwide.

BRINGING BACK PREDATORS TO RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS

Following the successful reintroduction of plains game, the translocation of predators to restored wilderness areas is a major new focus area for Peace Parks’ rewilding programmes in transfrontier conservation areas. In 2020, four hyenas were translocated to Zinave National Park. There are also plans to reintroduce other apex predators such as leopard and lion to various landscapes.



As Peace Parks CEO Werner Myburgh explains:



With the support of our partners, we are delighted to be playing a part in expanding the range of cheetahs, as part of our overall work in stabilising ecosystems and reintroducing carnivores to ecologically-restored landscapes. Not only is the rewilding programme in Maputo Special Reserve contributing to the reserve becoming a world-class wildlife and tourism destination, but restored ecosystems such as these are also critical carbon sinks to help contribute to mitigating climate change.”



Lying within one of the world’s 36 most biologically diverse and threatened ecosystems, the reserve is an essential component of the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation

and Resource Area, combining lakes, wetlands, swamp forests, grasslands and mangrove forests with a pristine coastline.



It was an emotional moment to see the cheetahs returning to the reserve, where they will take their rightful place in the ecosystem once more and help to further the development of an eco-tourism industry in this beautiful reserve,” said Myburgh.

Through the use of VHF satellite collars, the two males and two females will now be carefully monitored on a daily basis

by reserve management and the EWT, in partnership with the University of Eduardo Mondlane.



The cheetahs will fill a crucial niche in the ecosystem, helping to regulate the populations of medium to large-sized herbivores. With the hugely-improved levels of protection offered to the wildlife by bolstered ranger complements, a robust security infrastructure and enhanced tracking capabilities, we are fully equipped to ensure that the cheetahs are able to flourish,” concluded Mutemba.

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ABOVE Congressman John Tanner (ret.) at the ICCF U.S. Congressional International Conservation Gala



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends and colleagues,

In Washington, D.C. during the week of September 20, the ICCF Group hosted elected officials from the 20 conservation caucuses we support internationally. On this occasion, our Awards Dinner celebrated the 20-Year anniversary of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus, with keynote speakers including House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, the Chairman and CEO of the Global Environment Facility Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, and the Chairman of Mars, Inc., Frank Mars. ICCF presented awards to the Presidents of Angola and Colombia as well as philanthropists Rob and Melani Walton for their exceptional leadership in international conservation.

Interparliamentary exchanges were hosted by ICCF over the following several days, with roundtable events and educational briefings organized to foster a collaborative environment across countries on issues such as IUU fishing, sustainable tourism, and forest protection, among others.

We wish to thank our U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus and Oceans Caucus Co-Chairs, other elected officials, dignitaries, and our partners for their participation in these events, and we look forward to an exciting Fall.

Sincerely,



John B. Gantt
President

