



# Biodiversity Monthly Newsletter

Ethiopian Institute of  
Biodiversity



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## Guidelines for Reintroductions Now Available

**26 November 2012:** The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Species Survival Commission (IUCN SSC) Reintroduction Specialist Group has published its revised Guidelines for re-introductions and other Conservation translocations.

Conservation translocations are defined as the deliberate movement of organisms from one site for release in another. They are aimed at bringing conservation benefits at the level of a population, species or ecosystem. They consist of reinforcement and reintroduction within a species' indigenous range, and conservation introductions. They can be an effective tool but require rigorous justification, the Group notes. Since translocations pose many risks for other species, the ecosystem and humans, proposed translocations should be preceded by a comprehensive risk assessment. Where risk is high, the report finds, a translocation should not proceed.

Translocations of organisms outside of their indigenous range are considered to be especially high risk, given the examples of those species becoming invasive. Social, economic and political factors also should be considerations in decisions about translocations.

According to the publication, the design and implementation of conservation translocations should follow specific guidelines, be fully documented, and their outcomes made available to inform future conservation planning. Finally, translocated species will need to comply with international requirements, as for example the movement of species on Appendix I, II or III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) must comply with CITES requirements. Source: [biodiversity-1.iisd.org](http://biodiversity-1.iisd.org)

## Last 500 Ethiopian Wolves Endangered by Lack of Genetic Diversity

**November 13th, 2012** The last wolves in Africa face a difficult road if they are going to survive. Just 500 Ethiopian wolves (*Canis simensis*) remain in the mountains of the country for which they are named. The animals now live in six fragmented

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populations located hundreds of kilometers apart from one another; three of these populations have fewer than 25 wolves each. According to a study published last month in *Animal Conservation*, the Ethiopian wolf now suffers from low genetic diversity and a weak flow of genes between packs. As we have seen with other rare species such as Florida panthers, Tasmanian devils and great Indian bustards, low genetic diversity can result in inbreeding, impaired birth rates and the inability to adapt to diseases or other ecological threats. The danger for Ethiopian wolves is not theoretical—rabies outbreaks in 1991–92 and 2003 each killed several hundred wolves.

The 12-year study, conducted by researchers from the Zoological Society of London and other organizations, examined the genetics of 72 wild Ethiopian wolves from seven different populations. One of those populations, at Mount Choke, died out over the course of the study. The researchers found very little gene flow between the populations and conclude that restoring this flow—possibly by relocating some males or restoring migration corridors—could help increase the number of wolves while reducing the likelihood of inbreeding.

The animals aren't likely to travel between populations on their own. Ethiopian wolves, which arrived in the region 100,000 years ago during glacial times, have adapted to grassy, mountainous ecosystems 3,000 meters above sea level, where they prey almost exclusively on high-altitude rodents such as the big-headed mole rat (*Tachyoryctes macrocephalus*). Meanwhile, Ethiopia's human population continues to expand, from 48 million in 1990 to 84.7 million in 2011, making travel between wolf packs even more dangerous and unlikely.

Travel barriers and fragmentation aren't the only threats the wolves face. The animals are legally protected in Ethiopia but according to the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme they still face persecution by farmers afraid of potential livestock predation. Overgrazing by cattle has also damaged existing habitats and reduced the rodent populations that the wolves depend on for food. Even domestic dogs pose a danger—they have been blamed for the rabies outbreaks and have

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even, on occasion, bred with the wolves. Although widespread hybridization has not yet been observed, this poses yet another threat to the gene pool for the already endangered animals. Source: **ScientificAmerican.com**

### **MoU signed to restore degraded Lakes near Bishoftu**

**November 13th, 2012** November 13,2012 Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (IBC) signed a memorandum of understanding with ADA Woreda Land and Environmental Protection Bureau (AWLEPB) to collaborate on rehabilitation and environmental protection to be held on Lake Arengwade (Green Lake) and Lake Kilole, for their common benefit.

These two lakes have a potential in biological diversity. Though their salty PH level is suitable for existence of microbes, their value is declining through time due to unsustainable utilization of the lakes' resources and their surroundings.

Signing this MOU helps to develop and expand a framework of cooperation between IBC and AWLEPB to develop mutually beneficial conservation and sustainable utilization activities of various identified plants, animals and microbes through the rehabilitation and closure of the area.

They agreed to collaborate in the protection and rehabilitation of the Arengwade and Kilole Lake with their surrounding for sustainable use. Activities of mutual interest may include field research and outreach programs and projects related to biodiversity conservation.

The agreement stated that IBC Provides technical assistance for rehabilitation of the forest surrounding the lake and pursues joint research collaborations in all areas of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences including but not limited to biodiversity of the lake and its surrounding.

On the other hand AWLEPB Contributes to the conservation of biological resources and Lake Ecosystem and coordinate the community and human resource in planting



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indigenous trees and collaborate with local communities to work towards ensuring sustainability of the conservation and rehabilitation initiatives.

Ato Dechasa Aboye, Manager of ADA Woreda Land and Environmental Protection Bureau, said “signing of this MOU helps to prevent biological diversity loss in these two lakes and conduct researches on problems and their solution to rehabilitate its potential”.

Dr. Gemedo Dalle, Director General of Institute of Biodiversity Conservation, stated that “such cooperative work plays key roll to make use of the rich biological diversity of ADA Woreda for development of Ethiopia. We’ll collaboratively work with ADA Woreda to conserve these lakes and their ecosystem for the benefit of the society and the country at large”. **IBC**

### **Protected areas in East Africa may not be conserving iconic plants**

**November 7, 2012** A new study led by researchers from the University of York suggests protected areas in East Africa are not conserving plants such as the iconic Acacia tree. Acacia, the thorny flat-topped tree that characterizes the African savannas, is an important component of ecosystem diversity. However, the researchers found that the majority of Acacia biodiversity ‘hotspots’ receive little protection through the protected area network, which includes national parks, nature and forest reserves. The situation, they say, may be exacerbated by climate change.

The result of the study, which was led by researchers from the Environment Department’s Institute for Tropical Ecosystem Dynamics (KITE) and Centre for the Integration of Research Conservation and Learning (CIRCLE), and involved the Missouri Botanical Garden (St Louis, USA) and the East African Herbarium (Nairobi, Kenya), are published in the journal *Plant Ecology and Evolution*.

The researchers found that two thirds of Acacia diversity hotspots had less than 10 per cent coverage by protected areas. They also conclude that due to climate change, high-elevation, moisture-dependent species of Acacia may contract their

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ranges towards mountain peaks, where protected areas are dominated by forest reserves. These areas provide only a low level of protection compared to national parks and nature reserves.

Dr Andy Marshall, from the University's Environment Department and Director of Conservation Science at Flamingo Land Theme Park and Zoo, said: "The Acacia is one of Africa's most iconic groups of trees, but our data suggest protected areas such as national parks do not really conserve them. This is most likely because most protected areas were originally established to protect big game rather than to protect biodiversity and plants."

Principal Investigator Dr Rob Marchant, also from York's Environment Department, said: "Plants have long been over-looked in the design of protected area systems despite their role as the foundation of all terrestrial ecosystems, harnessing the Sun's energy and providing nutrients for the entire food chain.

"As conservation continues to develop a 'biodiversity for livelihoods' mandate, information on plant distributions and the ways in which ecosystems will respond to future climatic and economic developments is crucial."

Acacia includes a number of species that dominate extensive areas of East African woodland, wooded grassland and bushland. It occurs across a wide range of ecosystems, from arid deserts to mountain forests, and ranges from small shrubs to large trees.

The researchers used distribution modeling to predict the present day distribution of Acacia in East Africa and to establish how well members of the species are conserved under the current protected network. They also used regional climate forecasts to estimate the potential impact of climate change on two Acacia species of differing ecology, with one mountain species' range shrinking away from the highest designation of protected areas.

Dr Marshall said: "The question for managers is how best to deal with the potential mismatch between biodiversity and the current protected area network, both now

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and in the future. The strongest and most effective means of biodiversity conservation has consistently been in the establishment of protected areas.

### **Project on World Wide Views on Biodiversity Presents Final Report**

**November 8th, 2012** World Wide Views on Biodiversity, a global project aiming to raise awareness of biodiversity values, published its Results Report and presented it at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The project addressed Aichi Target 1 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which states that “By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.”

The project, supported by the CBD Secretariat, aimed to help close a widening democratic gap between citizens and policy-makers, as policy-making grows more global in scale. It gathered citizen views on international biodiversity policy issues – involving 3,000 citizens in 25 countries spanning five continents - and disseminated them to policy-makers involved in CBD deliberations.

The results of the global consultations showed strong public support for taking further political action to stop biodiversity decline. The results also highlight, among other issues, that: incentives and subsidies leading to overfishing should be phased out; protection of coral reefs is a shared responsibility; more protected areas should be established in the high seas; all countries should pay for protecting biodiversity in developing countries; and benefit-sharing should apply to genetic resources already collected.

### **A report on “Teff access and benefit sharing agreement” published**

**November 12th, 2012.** The amazing story of the Teff Agreement has been uncovered and meticulously documented in a recent FNI report by FNI researchers Regine Andersen and Tone Winge. Teff is a food grain endemic to the Ethiopian highlands, where it has been cultivated for several thousand years. Rich in

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nutritional value, it is an important staple crop for Ethiopians. Since it is gluten-free, it is also interesting for markets in other parts of the world.

A 2005 agreement between Ethiopia and the Dutch company HPFI gave HPFI access to 12 Ethiopian teff varieties, which it was to use for developing new teff-based products for the European market. In return, the company was to share substantial benefits with Ethiopia.

The Teff Agreement was hailed as one of the most advanced of its time. It was seen as a pilot case for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in terms of access to and benefit-sharing from the use of genetic resources (ABS).

But the high expectations were never met: The only benefits Ethiopia ever received were 4000 Euro and a small, early interrupted research project.

And then, in 2009, the company went bankrupt. In the years prior to bankruptcy, however, HPFI managed to obtain a broad patent on the processing of teff flour in Europe, covering ripe grain, as well as fine flour, dough, batter and non-traditional teff products. **FNI NEWS**

### **FAO Launches Africa Forest Communicators Network**

**29 November 2012:** The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) has announced the launch of the Africa Forest Communicators Network, which aims to develop capacity for forest communication in the region.

The network is a voluntary partnership facilitated by FAO and hosted by South Africa. It offers a space for communication officers from the public and private sector in member countries to share experiences and best practice techniques as well as forest-related resources.

The network provides country profiles highlighting facts on forests and forestry in member countries. The network members are: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. **FAO**