


a modest premium for the herders. With joint commitment for wildlife conservation from communities and conservation agencies, this novel initiative by the Chushul community indicates that large carnivores, such as wolves and snow leopards, and agro-pastoralist communities can coexist.

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A new 10-year conservation action plan for the western chimpanzee

The Critically Endangered western chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes verus*, listed in Appendix 1 of CITES and in Class A of the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, is estimated to have undergone a 20% reduction in range and an 80% decline in abundance during 1990–2014 (Humble et al., 2016, IUCN Red List; Kühl et al., 2017, *American Journal of Primatology*, 79, e22681). This decline is linked to a multitude of threats, including poverty, civil conflict, human–wildlife disease transmission, an increasing human population, habitat loss and fragmentation, the illegal pet trade, extractive industries, infrastructure development, a lack of law enforcement and political instability. Although western chimpanzees are protected by national and international laws throughout their range, enforcement and government capacity is weak, and > 70% occur outside protected areas (<http://apes.eva.mpg.de>). The western chimpanzee is patchily distributed across eight countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone) and probably extinct in Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo (Humble et al., op. cit.). Their total population is estimated to be 35,000 (range 15,000–65,000; Kühl et al., op. cit.).

In 2003 a 10-year Regional Action Plan for West African Chimpanzees generated numerous conservation actions (Kormos et al., 2003, *West African Chimpanzees. Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*, IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group). In light of the catastrophic decline of this subspecies, and emerging threats, Fauna & Flora International (FFI), Liberia, teamed up with the Section on Great Apes of the IUCN Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group in 2016 to coordinate the development of a revised 10-year regional action plan for the western chimpanzee. The goal was to ensure that regional action for conservation of the subspecies targets emerging key threats and is coordinated amongst stakeholders and supported in the long term.

In December 2017 FFI and the Section on Great Apes organized a regional western chimpanzee action planning workshop in Monrovia, Liberia, convened by the Forestry Development Authority (Liberia's governmental body charged with protecting forests and wildlife). A technical committee of international experts provided support to plan the agenda using an open standards conservation action plan approach (<http://cmp-openstandards.org>). Over 60 experts and policy makers across the western chimpanzee range state countries attended, along with specialists in ape conservation. The workshop was funded by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, ARCUS Foundation, and the USAID West Africa Biodiversity Climate Change programme.

During the 5-day workshop participants (1) reviewed data on the status of and threats to the western chimpanzee, (2) analysed the regional context as a basis for developing updated region-wide strategies for western chimpanzee conservation, (3) obtained information on current research and conservation work carried out by stakeholders across the region, (4) identified the conditions necessary for the implementation of the regional conservation action plan, and (5) agreed on the next steps necessary for finalizing the regional conservation action plan for the western chimpanzee.

The new 10-year regional western chimpanzee action plan is expected to be finalized and disseminated in early 2019. Stakeholders remain committed to work towards a vision in which viable populations of western chimpanzees thrive in healthy ecosystems and coexist in harmony with human populations.

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Can early- and mid-career conservationists get better career guidance?

In July 2017 the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) and WWF's Russell E. Train Education for Nature Program (EFN) hosted a knowledge café at the Society for Conservation Biology's 28th International Congress for Conservation Biology in Cartagena, Colombia. The event brought together 20 participants from 10 countries (Brazil, China, Colombia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Tanzania, UK, USA and Viet Nam) for an open and participatory discussion, based on structured questions, to help understand the types and levels of support required for early and mid-

career conservationists. Responses were focused on the context of conservationists from countries with developing and emerging economies.

CLP and EFN tailor their capacity building approaches to meet the needs of early- and mid-career conservationists in countries where capacity and access to resources are limited. They do this by awarding project grants, funding internships and scholarships, delivering training courses, mentoring, and supporting global networks of conservationists.

The discussion began with a focus on enabling factors, including establishing or becoming part of formal or informal networks and attending job fairs and expositions, especially those aimed at early-career professionals. Participants noted that those new to the sector benefit from understanding that careers will not necessarily be linear but may instead open up more adaptive or opportunistic career paths. This can be helpful for those mapping out a mid-term career path and is pertinent when considering the range of skills and aptitudes identified in conservation leadership literature.

It was recognized that a cultural shift within organizations is required to encourage career development, and that this may be challenging where long-standing staff are reticent to change. Participants suggested that progressive organizations could do more to collaborate with smaller organizations by supporting institutional capacity building and professional development, and that coaching and mentoring are required at all career stages but especially for early-career conservationists and those at a career crossroad.

Participants identified mentoring, development of soft skills (e.g. in proposal writing, communication, CV preparation), leadership training and participatory planning as important. The consensus was that these approaches deliver the greatest positive impact. In a 2014 survey of its alumni, CLP found that training needs decrease as alumni progress in their careers: alumni with 1–5 years of experience requiring training in proposal writing and biostatistics, and those with 10+ years of experience requiring broader training (e.g. in implementation of conservation strategies).

Participants identified that most entry level and volunteer positions in conservation are field-based, and there is therefore a need to identify and encourage opportunities that develop both field- and office-based skills, and that early-career conservationists require a stipend when volunteering, conducting project work or during internships. Universities and prospective employers were identified as potential collaborators in providing financial support or degree credits for internships. Within organizations, participants noted that career development is hampered by top-heavy management, with few opportunities for junior staff, that nepotism and preferential treatment may channel promotions to well connected people, and that where organizations do invest in skill development there can be barriers for staff to utilize and test their new skills.

To make progress towards developing early and mid-career conservation practitioners, the conservation sector could strengthen its understanding of careers through a sector-wide needs assessment, and a market analysis to identify the skills that people could develop to advance their careers. The conservation profession should continue to look at other sectors, such as health, international development and business, which have more experience of supporting human resource management and professional skills development.

The recommendations drawn from the discussion, although limited in scope, provide a snapshot of a larger, more complex situation that needs to take into account many different national, cultural and economic contexts. The information from the knowledge café will serve as a starting point for wider discussion. More in-depth discussions on this topic will take place during 30 July–1 August 2019 during the Capacity Building for Conservation Global Conference in London.

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