



Environment Program Highlights

April 2015

Volume 4

Achieving Results: Restoring Coral in Seychelles

Going from this...



Dedicated Nature Seychelles staff and volunteers working round the clock to restore the bleached corals off the Cousin Island of the Seychelles, with a view to return them to baseline conditions before the 1994 bleaching event

...to this!

In this Issue:

Achieving Results: Restoring Coral in Seychelles

What's New

Saving Our Valuable Wildlife

Reflecting Back: Beyond Enforcement

One Step At A Time: Appreciating Conservation Agriculture

1 Coral reefs are among the most biologically diverse and economically valuable ecosystems on earth, providing a range of ecosystem services including food, habitat, jobs, and protection of coastlines from storms and erosion.

2 In 1998 an El-Nino event coupled with the Indian Ocean Dipole, resulted in the highest seawater temperature anomaly recorded in 50 years, and in the World's greatest coral bleaching calamity. In the Seychelles this resulted in a 3% reduction of coral cover in some areas.

3 Through support from USAID, Nature Seychelles is piloting the first-ever large scale reef restoration

project in the region using 'coral gardening'. Coral gardening involves the collection of small pieces of healthy coral, raising them in underwater nurseries and then transplanting them to degraded sites. The areas under restoration are located within the marine protected area of Cousin Island Special Reserve, and off the coast of Praslin Island, Seychelles.

Last year, Nature Seychelles transplanted over 13,511 nursery-grown coral colonies, bringing the total of coral transplanted to 26,691 coral colonies since the project commenced in 2010. This represents an area of 5,225 m². Success of coral reef rehabilitation is measured by

how similar transplanted areas are to the condition of coral prior to the catastrophic bleaching event. This can take anything from five to over ten years to achieve. The project is achieving steady progress and already, results are becoming visible on the coral seascape. Notably, the restoration has brought back numerous fish species into the area, including the rarely sighted Humphead Parrotfish.

In partnership with SERVIR, a joint venture between USAID and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the project is using satellite-based earth observation data to monitor coral activity. See interesting links on page 2.



Environment Program Highlights

What's New

* The Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA) implemented Stepping Up to Sustainability project is expanding to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region in the fiscal years 2015 to 2017. The project aims to establish several "sustainability commons" sites across six SADC countries where interested people can access resources and build skills to live in a more sustainable manner.

WESSA has developed and administers an educational curriculum consisting of both accredited and unaccredited training courses to empower individuals to address climate change.

It is hoped that this expansion will contribute to strengthening the capacity of the Southern Africa region to respond to the impacts and risks associated with climate change through practical and applied adaptation practices.

* The USAID South Africa Low Emissions Development (SA-LED) project has recently been awarded. The main goal of the project is to support the Government of South Africa in its efforts to expand low emissions development or "green growth" in South Africa. Activities planned under the SA-LED are primarily advisory, limited to capacity building, planning, analysis, and project development. Expected results include strengthened capacity of public, private and civil society to develop fundable low-emissions projects in strategic sectors, and preparation and development of up to twenty innovative low emissions projects across South Africa during the first three years of the project. Ultimately, efforts aim to demonstrate reduced emissions potential in key sectors.



Saving Our Valuable Wildlife

Illegal Wildlife trade is a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise that is quickly rising in the ranks of the world's most profitable crimes. Wildlife trafficking has expanded from a conservation concern to a desperate security threat. Increased involvement of organized crime in poaching and wildlife trafficking promotes corruption, threatens the peace and security of fragile regions, strengthens illicit trade routes and destabilizes economies and communities that depend on wildlife for their livelihoods.

The recent and rapid increase in the illegal trade in wildlife threatens the survival of endangered species in southern Africa. In 2013 alone an estimated 30,000 African elephants were killed for their ivory. This represents an alarming 80 animals per day. Latest figures indicate a total of 1,215 rhinos poached in South Africa last year, representing an average of more than three animals per day or 100 per month. Rhino horn is worth more than gold or cocaine.

In many parts of the world including Southern Africa, those caught engaging in wildlife trafficking risk small fines or minimal jail sentencing. Through the Southern Africa Regional Environment Program (SAREP), USAID is working to change that equation by supporting countries in the region to impose stronger legislation, better enforcement, and stiffer penalties. Combating wildlife trafficking requires the engagement of governments in range states as well as transit and consumer countries globally.

To assist enforcement efforts, USAID has continued to promote commitments to conservation and to fighting the crime and corruption that fuels wildlife trafficking in the region through supporting efforts such as the establishment of the Wildlife Enforcement Network of Southern Africa. This promotes both information sharing and regional collaboration on wildlife poaching. In addition, USAID is closely working with communities in the Okavango River Basin through initiatives aimed at providing communities with incentives to protect wildlife, including measures to minimize the human-wildlife conflict.

Approaches include promoting alternative livelihoods that shift focus from poaching to ecotourism, conservation agriculture, fisheries and natural product harvesting and marketing. This holistic approach is already enhancing community beneficitation from natural resources within the basin, with the ultimate aim of deterring illegal wildlife trafficking.

USAID/Southern Africa seeks to develop partnerships with organizations working to combat wildlife crime in Southern Africa and jointly identify, develop, and test innovative approaches that can be shared throughout the region.

For more information on USAID's new Combating Wildlife Trafficking Program in Southern Africa, please see Addendum No. 2 at : <https://www.fbo.gov/spg/AID/OP/WashingtonDC/BAA-DIA-GFBC-2015/listing.html> or email CWTSouthernAfrica@usaid.gov

Interesting Links

<http://www.kisskissbankbank.com/les-seyelles-une-seconde-vie-pour-le-corail>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7CYT5shfNY>



Reflecting Back: Beyond Enforcement

"While the threats to wildlife are great, we can reduce them through our collective efforts. On this inaugural World Wildlife Day, I urge all sectors of society to end illegal wildlife trafficking and commit to trading and using wild plants and animals sustainably and equitably" -UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

March 3, 2015 marked this year's World Wildlife Day. This sparked off a series of international events on wildlife. The Elephant Summit and Kasane Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade, held in Botswana on March 23-25, 2015, brought together delegates from over 20 countries to build global commitment to address the poaching crisis. Among the expected outcomes of the two conferences are a report on progress made in the implementation of the London Declaration and the Kasane Statement. The Kasane Statement will build on the London Declaration to reflect additional commitments and actions required to address this crisis.

Prior to Kasane, USAID supported the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) /International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) Beyond Enforcement forum to look at the role of communities in combating wildlife trafficking. The findings were presented at Kasane.

The recommendations and report can be found here:

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/beyond_enforcement_summary_conclusions_and_recommendations.pdf
<http://pubs.iied.org/G03903.html>

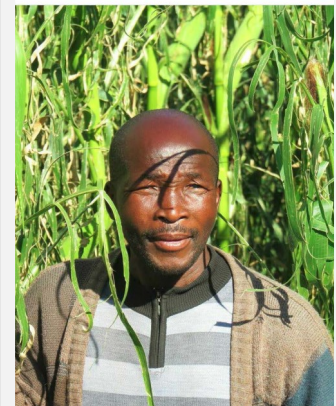
The conclusions of the Beyond Enforcement workshop were echoed by the Kasane statement, which called for the engagement of community groups and the appropriate retention of benefits from wildlife resources by local people. One message was consistently clear and stood out. ***Unless the current scale of illegal wildlife trade (IWT) is halted, many populations and even species of wildlife will cease to exist and can no longer contribute to community wellbeing and national economic development.***

One Step At A Time: Appreciating Conservation Agriculture

This is not a story about numbers-neither of dollars spent, nor of hectares under conservation agriculture. This is a story about an individual rural farmer up in the harsh, climate change affected highlands of Lesotho. As he stood proudly by his field, I could not help but admire his strength and determination. Climate change had affected the growing season, which was shorter by at least two months.

Ntate Molemohi, like many of his community members had to adjust planting time this season. A few weeks after planting his maize crop, terrible frost set in, and his crop was reduced to absolutely nothing. Without having to replant however, his crop sprang up-the very crop you see. To the amazement of the entire community, his crop stood out, above all others around him. Ntate Molemohi is one of the Institute of Natural Resources (INR) Lesotho Highlands Climate Change Adaptation project community ambassadors for conservation agriculture (CA). INR's ambassadors are volunteers who agree to take the lead in championing a specific project initiative within their communities.

Like so many others, this acre of land behind his backyard is all he had. He otherwise had to rent farm land in the hilly peripheral. So he made the best of it by trying out CA. Despite all the challenges with frost he said, this was the best crop he had had in years. He also pointed out something I had not realized before-that, unlike conventional agriculture, he had saved much more on manure costs because he only had to put a little manure in and around each hole. As I watched this proud CA ambassador, I suddenly appreciated CA like never before. I had come prepared to find out the numbers of hectares under conservation agriculture, hoping they had increased since my last visit the year before. What I got was more than I could have anticipated. I saw the impact of enhanced knowledge and capacity to make informed choices. I saw the impact on an individual whose experience had made him determined to take the message to his community. I saw the impact of having a local CA champion. As a CA ambassador, his message to this community was far more effective than the many an outsider like me or my colleagues could ever achieve. As a result of his example, his community would more than likely follow suit.



Proud Conservation Agriculture champion, Ntate Molemohi standing in front of his maize crop

The U.S. Agency for International Development provides economic, development and humanitarian assistance worldwide. USAID supports people's efforts to develop themselves and their countries. In Southern Africa, the United States seeks to increase trade and strengthen economic ties within the region, address the HIV/AIDS crisis, mitigate recurrent food insecurity, and strengthen democracy to reduce the risk of conflict in the region. USAID/Southern Africa, located in Pretoria, South Africa, complements and enhances USAID's bilateral programs in the region, supporting unique and innovative regional activities and providing a range of services to assist USAID missions in the region.

USAID/SA, P.O. Box 43, Pretoria, 0027. Tel: 27 (012) 452 2000, Fax: 27 (012) 460 3177

For more information about USAID/Southern Africa Environmental projects, please go to: <http://www.usaid.gov/southern-africa-regional>