

Workshop for the development of conservation strategies for the lion *Panthera leo* in West and Central Africa

Douala, Cameroon, October 5-7

Final official statement

Recently there has been serious concern about the status of the African lion, and recognition of the need to achieve consensus among the Range States on the way forward for improving its conservation and management.

Organized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and its Species Survival Commission, and its Cat Specialist Group, as well as the Wildlife Conservation Society and Africa Resources Trust, a workshop was held in Douala, Cameroon, from October 5-7 2005 to develop conservation strategies for the lion in West and Central Africa.

This workshop was supported by the Safari Club International Foundation, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Department of the Environment, Food Resources and Agriculture of the United Kingdom, and SADC (Southern African Development Community) .

Participants included : representatives from. Range State ministries in charge of wildlife conservation in West and Central Africa, regional offices of the World Conservation Union, members of the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group (Cat SG), members of ROCAL (West and Central African Lion Conservation Network), members of cooperating and nongovernmental organizations, and the national Cameroon media.

Participants came from the following countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Ivory Coast, Senegal, the United States, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, and Switzerland.

The workshop was facilitated by Dr. BIHINI WON WA MUSITI, Program Coordinator of IUCN ROCA (Regional Office for Central Africa) and Mr. JEAN MARC GARREAU, Program Coordinator of IUCN ROWA (Regional Office for West Africa).

The objective of the workshop was to develop conservation strategies for West and Central Africa, to assure conservation of the African lion in these sub-regions.

More specifically, the objectives were:

1. To ensure a better protection and management of threatened lion populations and consequently, the total biodiversity of the regional savannah ecosystems;
2. To identify and include the principal actors in lion conservation;
3. To reinforce partnerships in favour of the conservation of lion;
4. To strengthen capacity at the national and regional levels for more effective lion conservation;
5. To help identify and guarantee the resources, both human and financial, needed for lion conservation in the sub-regions; and
6. To provide guidelines for the formulation of national strategies, policies and action plans for lion conservation.

As a starting point for this strategic planning workshop, a technical session was held from October 2-4 in Douala, financed by WCS and organized by WCS in co-operation with the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, the African Lion Working Group (ALWG), and the West and Central African Lion

Conservation Network (ROCAL). This workshop developed an updated distribution map for lions in the region, modeled on similar exercises for the tiger, jaguar, and other species. Specific objectives of this technical session included:

- (1) to develop a spatially explicit summary of the status and distribution of the lion across its historical range in Africa,
- (2) to establish biological conservation priorities for African lion populations; and
- (3) to arrive at those priorities through a consensual process involving all the major current data holders and active conservation groups working on the lion in Africa.

The opening of the strategic planning workshop was chaired by Mr. MAHAMAT AMINE, Director of Fauna, representing the Ministry of Forests and Fauna of Cameroon.

After the opening ceremony, the workshop included presentations, plenary exchanges, and division into working groups.

Plenary sessions included the following:

- * Opening ceremony with the keynote address from the Representative of the Cameroon Ministry of Forests and Fauna;
- * Six presentations on lion status and conservation, including:
 - Presentation by Mr. Daniel NGANTOU, Regional Director of IUCN ROCA, *Background on the development of this sub-regional workshop for lion conservation in West and Central Africa*;
 - Presentation by Mr. SALEH Adam, President of ROCAL, *The road from Limbe to Douala: ROCAL's work to conserve lions in West and Central Africa*;
 - Presentation by Dr. Hans BAUER of the African Lion Working Group and Holland's University of Leiden, *Status and distribution of lions in West and Central Africa: a comparison of two recent surveys* ;
 - Presentation by Dr. Urs Breitenmoser, Co-Chair of the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, for Dr. Luke Hunter (WCS) and Ms. Kristin Nowell (Cat SG), *Prioritization of areas for lion conservation in West and Central Africa: results of the technical session (October 2-4, 2005)* ;
 - Presentation by Dr. Philippe CHARDONNET, Director, International Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, *Setting the context: Direct and indirect influences on lion conservation in West and Central Africa*;
 - Presentation by Dr. Cecil MACHENA, Africa Resources Trust, for Dr. James Murombedzi of IUCN Southern Africa regional office, *Legislative, policy and institutional frameworks in wildlife management that work*.
- * Presentation of the methodology for development of the logical framework for the sub-regional conservation strategies:
 - *Overview of the process and structure of the workshop. How to create a strategic framework* , by Dr. Bihini Won Wa Musiti, Facilitator;
 - *Definition of terminology to be used (including Goals, Objectives and Targets)*, by Dr. Bihini Won Wa Musiti.

After the various presentations, the participants identified a common Vision and Goal for their lion strategies, the Vision being "A West and Central Africa which sustainably manage their biodiversity", and the Goal: "To ensure the conservation and sustainable management of the lion in West and Central Africa." The participants then undertook a problem analysis in plenary, identifying a number of threats to the lion in the two sub-regions. Afterward, the participants split into two working groups, one for West Africa and one for Central Africa, to finalize the problem analysis for their respective sub-

regions, to identify objectives and actions, and complete the logical framework which will form the basis of the resulting conservation strategies.

It is planned for the West and Central African lion conservation strategies to be issued under the aegis of the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group in January 2006. The West and Central African workshop and strategies will serve as a model for the East and Southern African lion conservation workshop, which will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, on January 13-15 2006, and will feed into an overall continental synthesis strategy for the African lion.

Recommendations of the participants:

Upon the completion of the workshop's third day, the participants recognized and appreciated the process of mobilizing stakeholders to work within a logical framework to develop conservation strategies for the lion in West and Central Africa.

Their principal recommendations were as follows:

- the designation of a "focal point" for lion conservation and management by the Ministers of the governmental wildlife authorities in the lion Range States of West and Central Africa;
- the inclusion of all stakeholders (governments, private sector, NGO) in the development of national management plans for the lion, given that in West and Central Africa a large proportion of the lion population inhabits safari hunting concession zones;
- the development and implementation of national lion action plans by all the Range States;
- to inform and encourage all actors in lion conservation to be guided by the sub-regional conservation strategies;
- to carry out the recommended actions of the strategies through national action plans for lion conservation;
- the placement of coherent mechanisms of implementation of action plans on the scale of the sites of abundance of lions (Lion Conservation Units);
- monitoring and coordination between the national steps at the regional level by ROCAL working closely with the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group.

In addition, the participants request IUCN to secure the financial resources necessary to support the preparation of national lion conservation plans in West and Central Africa.

And they thank the organizers: IUCN, its Species Survival Commission and more particularly the Cat Specialist Group, the Safari Club International Foundation, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the West and Central African Lion Conservation Network, African Lion Working Group, Africa Resources Trust, DEFRA and SADC.

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The participants