

Ecole de Faune de Garoua

Investing in the next generation of wildlife conservation leaders in Central Africa.



countries, and facilitates conferences, seminars, and workshops.

EFG's certificate and diploma level courses are four semesters plus an applied wildlife research internship during the summer. Programs conducted by EFG focus on biology, conservation legislation and wildlife law enforcement, conservation priorities, and sustainable wildlife and protected area management. EFG has laboratories for biology, taxidermy, and botany (with more than 12,000 samples in its herbarium), a computer room, and dormitories where students live when they attend classes. With an emphasis on participatory learning, students have access to the 200,000 hectare Tcheboa Game Reserve, which is approximately 70 kilometers from EFG, and a field station in the humid forest zone on the north border of the Dja Biosphere Reserve. EFG's faculty consists of 13 permanent and more than 15 visiting lecturers as well as nearly 40 additional laboratory, administrative, finance, kitchen, and security staff.

Challenges Facing EFG

Over the years, EFG has encountered various challenges to its goal of providing wildlife managers with the tools they need to conserve their natural heritage, including:

Fluctuating student enrollment

Student enrollment at EFG has fluctuated over the past decades. This is due to financial hardship facing students and regional instability that has prompted decision-makers to focus on more prominent socio-economic issues rather than wildlife conservation.

Need for continuous faculty development

The ability of EFG's faculty to stay up-to-date on contemporary wildlife issues is a challenge that affects the quality of the education administered at EFG. Providing continuing education for faculty will result in improved student performance.

USFWS-supported students at Ecole de Faune de Garoua (EFG) in Cameroon. Credit: Ecole de Faune de Garoua



Cameroon's *Ecole de Faune de Garoua* (Wildlife College of Garoua, or EFG) is the only college in West and Central Africa designed to

train professionals from Francophone nations in sub-Saharan Africa in wildlife conservation and protected area management. EFG was established in 1970 under Cameroon's Ministry of Forests and Wildlife. Since its creation, the college has developed ongoing productive working relations with local

and international universities, research institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental entities, and local wildlife stakeholders.

Since its establishment, EFG has trained more than 1,300 wildlife professionals from 22 African and two European countries. Most of the graduates are currently working on the ground in various capacities including directors of national parks, conservation project managers, and heads of anti-poaching units. EFG also conducts short course training for ecoguards from various

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in collaboration with other African governments and NGOs, is working to develop the long-term capacity of African conservationists by providing scholarship support to students studying at Ecole de Faune de Garoua in Cameroon. Building upon an initial 3-year investment in 2011, USFWS signed a new five year cooperative agreement with EFG to invest \$500,000 leveraging \$117,000.



EFG students conducting field work. Credit: Ecole de Faune de Garoua

USFWS Support of EFG

The escalating threats to wildlife and habitats makes EFG's mission more critical than ever before. To assist EFG in addressing its challenges and achieving its goal, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and EFG signed an initial 3-year cooperative agreement in 2011. Through this agreement, USFWS awarded \$220,000 to provide scholarships for 11 students from West and Central Africa to study at EFG, and initiated a competitive faculty development program to further develop EFG staff's knowledge of wildlife issues and curriculum development. A new five year cooperative agreement for an additional \$500,000 is planned through 2019.

In addition, USFWS supported a new partnership between EFG and the Last Great Ape Organization (LAGA) on wildlife law enforcement. LAGA has shown great success working with government officials to enforce wildlife laws in Cameroon, and more recently through the EAGLE (Eco Activists for Governance and Law Enforcement) Network, in several other countries in West and Central Africa. In 2013, LAGA and EFG developed wildlife

law enforcement curriculum and held a workshop for all of EFG's faculty.

The cooperative agreement and the partnership with LAGA benefits not only Cameroon (one of two countries in the world that is home to two sub-species of gorilla and two species of chimpanzees), but also many other countries in the region. The forests of the Congo Basin make up the second largest contiguous tropical forest block in the world and are teeming with globally important and threatened wildlife, including forest elephants, okapis, bongos, bushpigs, and many primates. The region also has miles of beaches and surrounding waters with marine turtles, whales and dolphins.

This cooperative agreement builds the capacity of EFG, especially faculty capacity, to deliver a strong and competitive program of wildlife and protected area management and conservation to Francophone students in Africa. For example, this agreement is supporting a faculty member to carry out PhD work on great ape ecology and conservation in Lobeke National Park in Cameroon. Other faculty are receiving GIS (geographic information systems) training. Scholarships provide an incentive for

individuals to further their education without financial burdens. USFWS scholarship support for students at EFG is also an important mechanism to address student enrollment issues. Scholarships also help USFWS to identify and develop future field partners. This cooperative agreement demonstrates an effective collaboration with the Cameroon government, NGOs and USFWS to develop the capacity of EFG to build upon the knowledge of conservationist in Central and West Africa while providing the tools and training to conserve biodiversity. It also provides support to strengthen EFG as an organization in order to implement its strategic plan.

USFWS-supported students are now working in key landscapes and for several prominent conservation agencies in Africa, including Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Parc National de Nyungwe in Rwanda, Reserve de l'Air et du Tenere in Niger, and with the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation in various locations in Ivory Coast.

EFG's leadership maintains close communication with graduates to track their progress and get feedback to ensure that the curriculum remains competitive and effective in achieving conservation success across Francophone Africa. See: www.ecoledefaune.org

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
International Affairs
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: IA
Falls Church, VA 22041
Arlington, VA 22203
703-358-1754
703-358-2115/fax
internationalconservation@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/international>
twitter.com/USFWSInternat
Facebook: USFWSinternationalaffairs

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