

## **Fish and Wildlife Service and Garoua Wildlife College in Cameroon Launch Conservation Capacity Building Program**

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Without Borders (WWB) program has entered into a multi-year cooperative agreement with the Garoua Wildlife College [L'Ecole de Faune de Garoua (EFG)] in Cameroon aimed at enhancing wildlife conservation in Central and West Africa. The new program was finalized last September and will provide three scholarships per year to EFG staff from key protected areas where the Service works with partners on critical conservation efforts.

The program also establishes a faculty development program for EFG's staff to increase their competency in key areas of wildlife management and forest conservation. By supporting student enrollment while developing the capacity of teaching staff to incorporate contemporary conservation topics into their curriculum, the Service is helping EFG achieve its mission of training wildlife professionals from the French speaking nations of sub-Saharan Africa.

Since 1989, the WWB program has awarded over 2,500 grants for international wildlife conservation, targeting key species and regions to ensure the protection of some of the world's most endangered and charismatic animals. "This program works at the species, regional and global levels to leverage conservation actions designed to help restore at-risk species, enhance local people's capacity to conserve wildlife and collaborate with partners to identify critical conservation issues of mutual concern," said Service Director Dan Ashe.

The three 2011 FWS Garoua Scholarship Program recipients are Koi Koivogui of Ziama Reserve in Guinea, Landry Kmabale Vingwangwa, and Martin Kazerezi Barigomwa of Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The candidates were selected based on criteria addressing their personal commitment to conservation, how their training will impact the protected areas where they work, and their ability to transfer their knowledge and skills to other conservation colleagues upon completion of their studies.

After learning about his Service scholarship at EFG, Mr. Martin Kazerezi Barigomwa said, "Upon completing my studies at Garoua, I will train my fellow park rangers [at Virunga National Park] on what I have learned so that they are better able to carry out their duties and respond to the needs of tourists visiting the park."

Scholarship recipient Mr. Koi Koivogui said, "As part of my training, I'm hoping to improve my knowledge base, acquire new tools for understanding the management of wildlife resources and be sufficiently equipped to contribute to the sustainable management of biological resources in Guinea for present and future generations."

The Service-supported faculty development program will enable faculty members to improve their professional skills so that they can more effectively teach and conduct applied research on key issues of importance to wildlife conservation in forest zones. This professional development will ensure that students receive technical training on the most current methods and theories of wildlife and forest conservation.

“Helping the Garoua Wildlife College improve its capacity to provide conservation training in West and Central Africa will benefit wildlife conservation throughout the Francophone African countries,” said the Service’s Chief of International Conservation, Herb Raffaele.

The EFG was created in Cameroon in 1970 to provide in-service wildlife training for Francophone government agencies in sub-Saharan Africa. Since its inception, the college has trained over 1,300 students from 24 different countries. EFG plays a unique role in developing key competencies in wildlife management throughout the continent.

To learn more about the grants provided through the WWB’s Africa Regional Capacity Building Program, go to:<http://www.fws.gov/international/dic/regionalprograms/africa/Africa.html>

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