



Tropical News

CENTER FOR TROPICAL ECOLOGY & CONSERVATION

Department of Environmental Studies

Antioch University New England, Keene, New Hampshire, USA

www.CenterForTropicalEcology.org

Inside this issue:

Co-Director's Update	1
Announcing CTEC's 6th Annual Symposium October 24, 2009	2
Antioch University New England strengthens ties with National University of Rwanda	3
Summer Practicum in Guatemala By Sarah Stoner-Duncan	
The Maasai people of Narok District, Kenya participating in conservation of Loita Naimina Enkiyo forest by McArd Joseph Mlotha	4
CTEC Fundraisers	
Humpback Whales and the Dominican Republic: A Research Update By Christine Gleason	5
Spring 2009 Events	6
Student Research Update By Phillip Howard	
Alumni Spotlight	7
Thank You to CTEC Donors and Supporters	
How You Can Help CTEC	8

OUR MISSION

The Center for Tropical Ecology and Conservation is a non-profit organization at Antioch University New England which promotes the sustainable and just use of tropical ecosystems by training conservation leaders, conducting conservation research with partner organizations, and serving as an educational resource for the New England region.

Volume 9, Issue II/ Spring 2009

Edited by
Samantha Langlois & McArd Joseph Mlotha



Dennis Sonkoi, a Maasai and MSc Student, Natural Resources Management, ANE, speaking at a CTEC Brown Bag meeting, February 27, 2009 (see page 4). Photo by M.J. Mlotha

Co-Director, Peter Palmiotto's Update

The spring semester at the Center has been wonderfully full with student research presentations, talks by visiting scholars and gatherings of faculty and students with a common and passionate interest in tropical conservation. The Center continues to provide the place within the community for individuals to learn about how the tropics are an important part of their lives. As we regularly hear about global climate change and the interdependence we have on each other and ecosystems around the world the mission of the Center resonates loudly. We continue to work hard to attract students from and send students to tropical regions. Through our scholarship program we grant funds to our students conducting research or projects in the tropics, and to students who attend conferences. We have an endowment, called the Tropical Seed Scholarship, started by the generous donation of an alumna of the ES Department, which is offered annually on a competitive basis. We also hold year-round coffee sales, selling Dean's Beans organic coffee and hot chocolate, as well as t-shirts designed by CTEC students, to raise funds for the Student Raised Scholarship Fund. This fundraiser was initiated by a group of students in the ES Department, including Jeff Brown (now working in Nairobi, Kenya) and Troy Hansel (working in Lao PDR). CTEC students raise enough funds through these sales each year to grant \$1000 worth of scholarships. These two funds – the Tropical Seed Scholarship and the Student Raised Scholarship Fund - have allowed us this year to help send our students to Grenada, Dominican Republic and Guatemala to participate in important conservation projects (see student articles inside), as well as to laboratories at other universities as part of their research. Being able to offer scholarships is an important component of CTEC's mission, and we thank those individuals who generously support our scholarship programs, for example the committed Antioch community members who regularly buy our coffee. We are very appreciative of everyone's support. In addition to the grants we offer, we maintain a searchable database of grant resources from various organizations and institutions around the world on our CTEC webpage – this resource is accessible to anyone anywhere, and is a service we offer to the wider community. If you have not yet done so, please explore the grants section of our webpage at <http://www.centerfortropicalecology.org/support/grants/>. If you are interested in contributing to our scholarship program, please contact us.

Announcing CTEC's 6th Annual Symposium October 24, 2009 Wildlife Solutions: Overcoming Human-Wildlife Conflict Issues

As the global population increases, and humans need more and more land to survive, wild populations of animals are faced with shrinking and fragmented habitats. This is causing an ever increasing number of conflicts between humans and wildlife as their interactions become more frequent. Wildlife are often seen simply as a nuisance or competition for resources which may already be scarce. These conflicts can be detrimental to wild animal populations, particularly threatened and endangered species. In order to prevent further declines in wildlife populations, scientists, educators and local communities must work together to try to solve the various human-wildlife conflict issues.

The purpose of this symposium is to bring together researchers, educators, students and advocates from New England and the Tropics to discuss contemporary applied research and form collaborative relationships. Participants will have the opportunity to interact with other professionals in the field and share ideas on how to encourage a global conservation ethic.

Symposium Goals:

- To give researchers and educators the opportunity to discuss current human-wildlife conflict issues in the Tropics and form collaborative relationships.
- To explore current research and recommendations about human-wildlife conflict interventions including: improving current techniques for intervention, finding financially sustainable practices, transference of scientific findings to policy, decreasing human-wildlife competition for natural resources.
- To discuss the role of scientists as educators in local communities where human-wildlife conflict is a problem.
- To discuss ideas of how to promote a community-based conservation ethic focusing on sustainable natural resource use and wildlife tolerance.

Abstracts for oral and poster presentations should address one or more of the symposium goals. Submissions should be no more than 300 words in length and include complete contact information.

Deadline for abstracts is 3rd August 2009

For more information please contact:
Kristin Godfrey at kgodfrey@antioch.edu

Antioch University New England strengthens ties with National University of Rwanda by CTEC co-director Beth Kaplin

Antioch University President David Caruso and National University of Rwanda (NUR) Rector Silas Lwakabamba recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the relationship between the two institutions. We are very pleased with this initiative as it is a big step in further developing our collaboration with Rwanda and the conservation efforts in the region. Antioch's ties with Rwanda are already strong due to CTEC's initiatives. This signing follows up on the work I have been doing at NUR to develop biodiversity conservation programs with MacArthur Foundation funding. Since 2000, we've had nine students in the ES MS and PhD programs, all CTEC members, work on various projects in Rwanda, from Practicum and Service Learning Projects, to thesis and dissertation research, with governmental organizations, NGO's and universities in Rwanda. We had Visiting Scholar Dr. Anastasie Gasogo, professor in Biology Department at NUR, visit Antioch New England's campus for one month in November 2008 to observe our classes and improve her English. Our future plans for this collaboration include co-teaching, collaborative team research projects, and student and professor exchange visits. We would like to get other Antioch New England departments, as well as Antioch alumni, involved. If you are interested in learning more about our collaboration with National University of Rwanda please contact me at bkaplin@antioch.edu



Photos:

Top: Steven Guerriero, (fourth from left) standing outside Biology Department, National University of Rwanda with students and staff during a recent visit to Rwanda. Steven is the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Core Faculty within the Department of Organization & Management at Antioch University New England. Photo by B.A. Kaplin.

Left: David Caruso, The President of Antioch University New England giving a gift to Dr. Anastasie Gasogo, a professor in the Biology Department at National University of Rwanda (NUR), and Project Coordinator for the Conservation Biology Education (CBE) Project, which is funded through the MacArthur Foundation. Photo by B.A. Kaplin.

Summer Practicum in Guatemala By: Sarah Stoner-Duncan, MS Candidate Individualized Program

My four-credit summer practicum will take place at Parque Hawaii, a natural reserve located on the Pacific Coast of Guatemala. The reserve is run by a non-profit Guatemalan organization, Asociacion de Rescate y Conservacion de Vida Silvestre (ARCAS). The organization is dedicated to wildlife and mangrove conservation, environmental education, and community development. In 1993, ARCAS initiated its conservation activities in the Hawaii area to counteract threats to leatherback and olive ridley turtle populations from over-harvesting by local egg collectors. Despite their endangered status, virtually all sea turtle nests in Guatemala are poached and the eggs marketed as an aphrodisiac. ARCAS operates the most productive of the 21 turtle hatcheries in Guatemala. It solicits donations of sea turtle eggs from local collectors, reburies the eggs in the hatchery and after an incubation period of roughly 50 days, the hatchlings are released into the sea. Nearly 40,000 sea turtle eggs were collected at the Hawaii hatchery in 2006, accounting for nearly 50% of the eggs collected in Guatemala.

ARCAS believes that any successful conservation effort must not only be directed at protecting natural resources, but also at helping local residents meet their economic, educational and social needs. An important aspect of ARCAS's program in Hawaii is environmental education. The aim of all these activities is to teach local children the importance of conserving the natural resources on which they depend. I will focus my practicum on working on current environmental education projects, as well as designing and developing additional opportunities for school children to be involved with sea turtle conservation. My belief that the training of conservation leaders must start at a young age is at the root of my major in the Individualized Program at Antioch. This practicum experience with ARCAS will set in motion the research, collaborations and theory for my Masters Project.



BUY 100% ORGANIC, FAIR TRADE COFFEE AND LOCALLY DESIGNED AND PRINTED T-SHIRTS FROM

THE CENTER FOR TROPICAL ECOLOGY & CONSERVATION

AT

www.centerfortropicalectology.org

ALL PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS A

SCHOLARSHIP

FOR CTEC STUDENTS PURSUING THEIR RESEARCH IN THE TROPICS

Interested in tropical conservation and research?

JOIN CTEC TODAY!

Email ctec@antioch.edu
For more information



The Maasai people of Narok District, Kenya participating in conservation of Loita Naimina Enkiyio forest by McArd Joseph Mlotha

The Maasai belongs to indigenous groups of east Africa, and are mostly found in the southern part of Kenya and the northern part of Tanzania. The Maasai are predominantly pastoralists. When I met Dennis Sonkoi, a master's student in the Resource management and Conservation program at Antioch University New England, I was astonished to learn about the efforts the Maasai are making to conserve their sacred forest. Dennis comes from a Maasai community in Narok District within the Rift Valley of Kenya. He co-founded Loita Development Foundation (LDF), a non-governmental organization that aims at developing enterprises for community environmental education, sustainable utilization of the natural resources in the Loita area and especially its famous sacred forest.

Dennis gave a presentation on Community conservation initiatives among the Maasai of Narok District, Kenya : case study of Loita Naimina-Enkiyio Forest. In his presentation, Dennis explained that considering the threats faced by their sacred forest, Loita Naimina-Enkiyio Forest, which means a "Forest of the Lost Child", led to the establishment of LDF. Since its inception, LDF has established an animal health program, livestock marketing, and eco-tourism and conservation programs. However, the size of the forest has been reduced since part of the forest was cut for resettlement of people displaced due to urbanization. In spite of the fact that most Maasai are not formally educated, they are highly knowledgeable about wildlife found in the forest, their uses, general ecology and the available resources. In 2005, the Ashoka fellowship nominated Dennis as a Fellow for developing means and ways of addressing the socio-economic and environmental needs of his community. We are proud to have him at Antioch University New England.



A Maasai man sitting in Loita Naimina-Enkiyio Forest, photo provided by Dennis Sonkoi

Humpback Whales and the Dominican Republic: A Research Update

By: Christine Gleason, MS Candidate Conservation Biology

On January 8th 2009 I arrived in Samaná, Dominican Republic to begin my field work. Samaná is located on the north-eastern side of the Dominican Republic on the Samaná Peninsula. From January 15th to March 15th it is an ideal place to observe the mating rituals of the North Atlantic Humpback Whale. The primary purpose of my study was to investigate the conservation knowledge and attitudes of whale watching tourists, specifically trying to assess the knowledge of tourists in the categories of marine mammal conservation and threats. The secondary purpose of my study was to obtain the opinions of these tourists in regards to marine mammal conservation and education, threats to marine mammals and the potential impact of whale watching.



Victoria II and her crew docking in Samaná Harbor


People come from all over the world to visit Samaná and go whale watching in Samaná Bay but little effort is made to educate tourists during their cruise. In fact, of all the companies that provide whale watching excursions only one company, Victoria Marine, provides a trained, multi-lingual naturalist. I hope the results of this study will encourage education aboard whale watching boats and help to improve the educational information on the Victoria Marine vessels.



Kim Beddall, owner of Victoria Marine, narrating a whale watching trip on Victoria II

I began my data collection the last week of January. Data were obtained aboard the whale watching vessel, *Victoria II* at the beginning of each cruise via a written survey. My surveys were available in English, German, French and Spanish in hopes of collecting a more diverse sample. In addition to collecting data for my research I also collected data for a local non-profit called CEBSE. The primary purpose of this data collection was to obtain fluke (tail) pictures for the newly created Humpback Whale Identification Catalog of Samaná's humpbacks. Additional data such as whale location, general behavior and physical parameters such as weather conditions were also collected.

Overall my field season was very successful. I was able to complete my data collection, volunteer my time with the local conservation effort and experience an amazing new culture. I hope to continue my work in Samaná in the future.

Humpback Whale,  (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

Source: <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/humpback-whale.html>



CTEC's Spring 2009 EVENTS REVIEW

February 27th

Moving towards community conservation initiatives in Loita Naimina-Enkiyio Forest in Narok District, Kenya with Dennis Sonkoi, MS Student, AUNE

April 2nd

How to do Thesis Research: Lessons Learned During the Thesis Process, A Panel Discussion with Jason Estes, Christine Gleason and Katherine Blake, MS Candidates, AUNE

April 23rd

Discussion on what NGOs want from prospective employees with Dr Ann Viets from The School for International Training (SIT), Brattleboro, Vermont

Student Research Update

by: Phillip Howard, MS Candidate Conservation Biology

Relatively little is known about the potential of a shaded cacao agroforestry system to act as a biological refuge in the West Indies, with nothing being known about how birds use cacao plantations in the small island nation of Grenada. With the increasing demand for chocolate worldwide, more land is being converted into cacao plantations with traditional shade grown methods of cacao being replaced with more modern but environmentally harmful sun grown methods in an effort to increase short-term yields. This trend in cacao growing methods is similar to the shift in coffee growing methods that occurred during the 1970's which have been extremely detrimental for many species of birds that have come to rely on these secondary agroforestry habitats for survival. In Grenada a study of the full spectrum of cacao management is possible and could give new insight into how shade levels in a cacao plantation impact bird species richness. Such a study would help answer basic questions that are still unclear and under much debate, such as what types of bird assemblages a shaded cacao agroforestry system can support.

This summer during July and August I will be traveling to Grenada to initiate my thesis research on cacao cultivation and its impact on bird species richness. The opportunity to travel to Grenada is being facilitated by a practicum with L.A. Burdick Chocolate who is partnering with the Grenada Cocoa Association to assess the distribution of the varieties of cacao grown on the island. My practicum will look at what kinds of cacao cultivars exist in Grenada, where they exist and why they exist with two main goals: creation of a natural history of cacao in Grenada and a spatial analysis of cacao in Grenada using GIS. This practicum will not only have a direct effect on long-term preservation and conservation of quality cacao in Grenada but will allow me to establish survey sites and conduct a wet season census of resident bird populations in the full spectrum of cacao management on the island (rustic, shade, sun, abandoned). My second sampling season will occur during a second trip to Grenada in the dry season when migratory birds are present.



Cacao flower

Alumni Spotlight: Updates

Jeff Brown publishes his thesis work:

CTEC alumnus Jeff Brown will have an article entitled "**Status of the Western Black Crested Gibbon, *Nomascus concolor*, in the Nam Ha National Protected Area, Lao PDR**" published in the 2009 issue of "The Gibbon Journal" due out in May. This article can be accessed online at www.gibbonconservation.org. The article is based on Jeff's thesis research which he conducted in 2005/2006 in the Nam Ha Protected Area, Laos. The research was sponsored by the United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WCS, and CTEC. Jeff and his wife Sharon (former Antioch librarian) moved to Kenya in 2006. They are both enjoying life in Kenya where they both work at the International School of Kenya. They welcomed the birth of their daughter, Margaux, born in Nairobi, Kenya in December, 2008.



Life in Kenya
Photo by Jeff Brown

Rachel McShane sees a bright future:

After completing coursework at ANE back in May 2006, I found a position as an Environmental Scientist with an environmental engineering and consulting firm in St. Louis, MO. I probably wouldn't have gotten this job had I not had a practicum with the New Hampshire Army National Guard's environmental division, so I am very grateful for that experience. The company I'm working for is a small, minority-owned business, and I have really enjoyed working there, both because I appreciate the passion and diligence of my coworkers, and also because it is gratifying to know that we're helping clean up my hometown community. Particularly wonderful is the flexibility they showed me in taking time off to complete my thesis.

After I obtained my Masters in June 2008, I wanted to challenge myself further by seeking a teaching position at the college level, and was successful in obtaining an Adjunct Faculty position in the Biology Department of St. Charles Community College. I'm currently about 2/3 done with my first semester teaching Environmental Science and Intro Bio Lab, and I absolutely *adore* being in academia! Though it can sometimes be overwhelming working two jobs, I find both equally rewarding in very different ways. I am always learning something new, and am excited to be in a field that is so important at this point in history. On my urging, my consulting firm has recently joined the US Green Business Council, and we will soon begin helping our clients build/retrofit environmentally responsible, healthy, and energy efficient buildings. Despite the current state of the economy, the future shines bright, and I look forward to a renewed sense of environmental responsibility and leadership in this country. I'm proud to be a part of that.

A Sincere THANK YOU to our 2008 Annual Fund Supporters and Donors!

Nancy and Robert Aneyci
Eleanor Briggs
Nancy and Daniel Cook
Nicole and Simon Gross-Camp
Judith Kaplin
Beth Kaplin & Jim Jordan
John and Denise Kaplin
Troy Hanzel
Sandra Hemphill
Anne Humphrey

Anne McGeough
Dorothy & Dudley Mann
John and Dixie Milliken
Mercer & Peter O'Hara
Mr. & Mrs. Robert O'Hara
Peter & Jennifer Palmiotto
Shirley & Bruce Richardson
Norm Rosen
Susan Thomas
Peter & Candace Vanaken
William J.J. Gordon Foundation



Center for Tropical Ecology & Conservation
 Antioch University New England
 40 Avon Street
 Keene, NH 03431
603.283.2348
ctec@antioch.edu

We're on the web!
www.CenterForTropicalEcology.org

Help CTEC save trees!
 Request an electronic copy of Tropical News.
 Email :
ctec@antioch.edu



CTEC STAFF
 From left to right :

- Joseph Mlotha**
Program Manager
- Sarah Stoner-Duncan**
Information Coordinator
- Peter Palmiotto, D.F.**
Co-Director
- Robin Martino**
Research Assistant
- Samantha Langlois**
Education Coordinator
- Kristin Godfrey**
Symposium Coordinator
- Phillip Howard**
Research Assistant
- Beth Kaplin, Ph.D.**
Co-Director

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

The Center for Tropical Ecology & Conservation is a non-profit organization and as such, greatly depends on the contributions of individuals like you.

Contributions may be designated to support one of our three main project areas – Research, Education, or Student Support; or you may contribute to general support.

You can find more information about our three project areas online at:

www.CenterForTropicalEcology.org

please contact us at
603.283.2348 or **CTEC@antioch.edu**

Your support helps make it happen!

THANK YOU!

- Yes, I would like to donate to the Center.
 I have enclosed a check for \$_____.
Make checks payable to Antioch University New England
- I would like my donation to go to:
 - Research
 - Education
 - Student Support
 - General
- I am not able to donate at this time but please add me to your contact list so I can receive notification of CTEC Events.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Email: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO:
Center for Tropical Ecology & Conservation
AUNE, 40 Avon Street, Keene, NH 03431