DECEMBER 1996 – FEBRUARY 1997 VOLUME 32 • NUMBER 1

AFRICAN WILDLIFE NEWS

AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

Annual Highlights of 1995–1996

On the green slopes of Uganda's Bwindi National Park, rangers, guides and Peace Corps volunteers work with Liz Macfie of the African Wildlife Foundation and the International Gorilla Conservation Program to protect 300 mountain gorillas, half of the entire world population. The lives of these gentle giants are made more secure through the work of their human champions, who have developed strategies of creative protection, combined with carefully controlled tourism and the sharing of benefits and responsibilities with local people.

Some six hours away, in the dry savannahs surrounding Lake Mburo, Mark Infield of AWF and Arthur Mugisha, the new community conservation officer of the Uganda Wildlife Authority, are leading the way in collaboration with Bahima pastoralists to establish a herd of Ankole cattle that will be protected within the national park. The undertaking combines a sensitivity to local culture with the international goals of biodiversity conservation.

In the bustling capital city of Kampala, the Environmental Economics Association of Uganda has officially opened. Resulting from the leadership of Lucy Emerton of AWF's Conservation and Commerce Program, this new nongovernmental organization will apply economic arguments to the defense of the country's tropical forests.

Studies of business find the factor most crucial to success is the presence of a "champion" for a particular idea or product. Top companies emerge from the leadership of men and women who are passionate, committed, inventive. Conservation in Africa is no different from business—it requires champions, too.

Since the beginning, the AWF has sought to nurture champions—leaders—within AWF itself and its partners, among them government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, rural villages and, beginning this year, the commercial sector.

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CRAIG R. SHOLLEY

The vigilance of conservationists, park rangers and local residents has made the lives of Africa's endangered mountain gorillas more secure.

Fellowships To Assist African Professionals

AWF has established the Charlotte Conservation Fellowship Program in tribute to the life and work of Charlotte Kidder Ramsay, a dedicated conservationist and steadfast friend of the foundation.

REBECCA VILLARREAL/AWF

The new program honors the memory of AWF benefactor Charlotte Kidder Ramsay.

Through the generosity of Charlotte's family, AWF has launched the program to support graduate-level studies of young Africans in species and ecosystems, community conservation and resource economics.

"Charlotte had an abiding passion for the people and wildlife of Africa," AWF President R. Michael Wright said. "An ardent believer that the fate of the continent's natural resources is in the hands of Africans themselves, she wholeheartedly endorsed AWF's mission of preparing talented individuals for leadership in conservation. These fellowships are a fitting memorial for this remarkable woman."

Charlotte contributed significantly to many aspects of AWF's work—to studies of the elephants of Amboseli in Kenya, protection of the mountain gorillas in Rwanda and community conservation work in Tanzania.

Before her death in September 1995, Charlotte, a resident of Washington, D.C., had been investigating ways to do more to support researchers and environmental education. In addition to the fellowships, a portion of the family's grant is directed toward AWF's new Community Conservation Service Center in Tanzania (see annual highlights, page 4).

The Charlotte Fellowships provide support for recipients seeking a master's degree or conducting field research for a doctoral degree. They are awarded to Africans ages 21 to 40 whose work experience and studies to date demonstrate a solid commitment to natural-resource protection.

Six Africans have been named as the first Charlotte Fellows for 1996-97. "I think Charlotte would be delighted with this first group," Wright said. "They are impressive individuals with singular skills and great promise."

The fellows, and their current positions, study areas and universities, include:

Paula Kahumba, Ph.D. candidate, Princeton University; dissertation field research into interactions between trees and elephants at the Shimba Hills Reserve in Kenya. A talented researcher undaunted by harsh working conditions in the field, Kahumba is interested in how African elephants, which must live in increasingly confined spaces, affect forest habitats. Born in Kenya, she earned her master's degree in wildlife and range sciences from the University of Florida. She has worked for the National Museums of Kenya and the Kenya Wildlife Service's elephant program. Kahumba's proposed research will analyze the role of elephants in creating, destroying or maintaining vegetation.

Daniel (Hector) Magome, general manager for planning and development, National Parks Board of South Africa; Ph.D. research into policy links between protected areas and rural community development, Durrell Institute of Conservation Ecology, University of Kent, United

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AWF Celebrates 35 Years In Africa