

Educating each other

As part of an USFWS application to consolidate and further resource the environmental education programmes that SRI works with, earlier this year I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to visit the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) in Kenya to observe, and learn from, how their Environmental education and Eco-Literacy Programme (EELP) operates.

Sylvester Kampamba | Conservation Education Officer, North Luangwa Conservation Programme

I took a bus to Lusaka, where I stayed the night, and then headed to the airport (the first time I'd been to an airport to catch a flight) from where I flew to Nairobi, Kenya via Lilongwe, Malawi. From Nairobi, I took a much smaller plane to Nanyuki, where the LWF is based. On arrival, I was met by Anthony King (LWF's Director) and Samuel NJoroge (the new EELP Officer).

Almost immediately, we went into a meeting to discuss how LWF's EELP helps to address issues of resource and human-wildlife conflict in the local area. I very quickly saw that many of the issues are similar to those experienced here in Zambia and that I would be able to apply many of the lessons that they'd learned to my work. I explained a bit about my role and the way we deliver conservation messages to our local community. I mentioned that, because we are based in the very middle of the North Luangwa National Park, it is difficult for us to have an information centre; that the flooding of the Luangwa River is a major problem in the rainy season; and that, because of the mountains on the western side of the Park, we would need a really strong 4x4 bus to carry out any school game drives.

That afternoon, Sammy and I took a trip to Ol Pejeta Wildlife Conservancy to see the information centre that has been established there. At the centre, they have lots of pictures, bones and skins of animals

so that, if students are unable to see certain animals during their game drives, they can learn about them at the centre. They've also been collecting lots of animal dung and one of the officers asked me and Sammy to try and distinguish between black and white rhino dung. We both answered wrongly! But then we learned to identify how the different feeding habits translate into the appearance of the different rhinos' dung.

I also had the opportunity to visit Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and meet Ephantus Mugo, who

used to be the EELP at LWF. Ephantus demonstrated some of his lesson plans and showed how he tackled issues such as food chains and ecosystems. I cover these topics in my lessons too, so it was really helpful to see how he approached the subjects. In return, I demonstrated how I teach about the importance of interdependence by getting students to form a circle and sit down slowly on the knees of the person behind, keeping their own knees together to hold the person in front of them.

Before I left, I gave a formal PowerPoint presentation on our education programme. I first presented the way we have conducted our lessons in previous years and then I demonstrated the changes that Tine Stausholm Christiansen (my mentor from Givskud Zoo in Denmark) has tried to help me implement. I presented the newly designed lesson 'A healthy ecosystem' and explained the system of teaching that I use. I highlighted how I try to direct questions back to learners during the programme and that I continually try to create enthusiasm

I try to direct questions back to learners and create enthusiasm for rhino conservation



for black rhino conservation, by reminding the people

I'm teaching that this species was once totally extinct in Zambia. I also showed the Teachers' Training Guide that I and the other teachers always use for lessons. Sammy was really impressed with this, so I gave him a copy to keep.

I would like to thank SRI and USFWS and the LWF for allowing this exchange to happen. I have learnt a huge amount and have lots of ideas to integrate into the conservation education programme here at North Luangwa.

Support

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A meeting of minds: Sylvester and Sammy