

Wildlife Outreach Network

Project News 2007

New projects, new countries and new friends – with Outreach supporting six new projects in five new countries in 2007.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mount Tshiaberimu lies in the Virungas National Park in the D.R. Congo and is home to a small group of critically endangered mountain gorillas. A decade ago the group was threatened by mining, hunting and subsistence activities of the communities surrounding the park and faced the real prospect of extinction.

In 1997 the Gorilla Organisation pledged to protect this tiny population. Since then hundreds of local people have benefited from a dynamic community education programme and are now keen to protect 'their' gorillas. With the recent arrival of Baby Musomboli the gorilla population there now stands at 21, an increase of 30%. In 2007 Outreach was pleased to support this superb environmental programme.

Uganda

With gorilla protection in mind, Outreach was delighted to be able to give a little help to the infant Wildlife Clubs in Uganda, being established by the Gorilla Organisation. The clubs are vital for informing young people about gorillas, their forest habitat and the need to protect them. 34 new clubs have been formed this year in addition to the 21 clubs set up in 2006. The membership of the clubs is now over 1000.

Kenya

Staying in Africa, Outreach supported the Tsavo Wildlife Education Project run by WPSA (World Society for the Protection of Animals) in the Tsavo West National Park where poaching of wildlife for 'bushmeat' has escalated out of control. Now an education officer is working with schools, communities and local authorities to change the attitude towards the consumption of bushmeat.

Tibet

This year Outreach continued its 'Trees for Tibet' programme in association with Rokpa UK Overseas Projects by funding the purchase of 2900 trees for planting at a new site, Shelsin in east Tibet. Extensive deforestation in Tibet has had disastrous consequences for wildlife and humans. Rokpa is working to replant deforested areas and to protect them with the help of local people.

Portugal

Nearer to home, Outreach gave a little first-time help to SPEA (BirdLife in Portugal) via the Honeyguide Wildlife Trust. SPEA has a network of Important Bird Areas (IBA's) with local volunteers acting as caretakers. With Honeyguide's support, SPEA is endeavouring to improve the vital bird monitoring on the protected west coast IBA.

France

Finally, in the French Pyrenees the LPO (French Bird Protection League) is working hard to protect Europe's scarcest bird of prey, the bearded vulture or lammergeier. LPO's effort includes the careful monitoring of the now-increasing lammergeier population, site protection in collaboration with other mountain users and food provision in the breeding season. I happen to know that this spectacular bird of prey is very close to the heart of Honeyguide founder, Chris Durdin, so Outreach was pleased to help.

Other ongoing projects in 2007

- ❖ Support for the protection of threatened conifers in Vietnam (Fauna & Flora International).
- ❖ Support for a small reforestation programme in Sri Lanka (via Rainforest Concern).
- ❖ Help for a local high altitude reforestation project in Peru (via Rainforest Concern).
- ❖ Support for the protection of leatherback turtles at Soropta beach, Panama (Rainforest Concern).
- ❖ Help for red kite protection in Menorca. (Balearic Ornithological Group via Honeyguide Wildlife Trust).
- ❖ Help for young birdwatchers in Ostia, Italy (LIPU Ostia).
- ❖ Outreach also sponsored the purchase of a further 10 acres of forest in the Intag Region of Ecuador (via Rainforest Concern) bringing the Outreach total to 40 acres.

Outreach does not appeal for funds, relying instead on the generosity of sympathisers and the proceeds of local fundraising. Since Autumn 2004 it has donated £7462 to local projects overseas, usually in countries where a little money goes a long way.