

# Mentoring and Team Building for Long-term Wildlife Conservation Capacity Development: *From MENTOR-POP to MENTOR-Bushmeat – Experiences and Impacts* A Side-event for the Seventh CBFP Council Meeting CBFP Wildlife Conservation Capacity Working Group Date: December 17, 2019 Time: 4:15 PM Location: Douala, Cameroon

## Background

With changing and emerging threats to Central Africa's wildlife populations, there is an urgent need to enhance the capacity of Central African conservation leaders to address the threats impacting wildlife and their habitats in the region. Team building and mentoring are increasingly important tools for conservation capacity development.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) MENTOR Fellowship Programs use team building and long-term mentoring along with rigorous academic and field learning to develop transdisciplinary teams of emerging African conservation professionals to address threats to wildlife.



MENTOR-POP Fellows

Since 2008, USFWS has supported six MENTOR programs across Africa, with topics ranging from the bushmeat trade in East Africa (MENTOR/BEAN) and chimpanzees in West Africa (MENTOR-PACE) to forests (MENTOR-FOREST), manatees (MENTOR-Manatee), pangolins (MENTOR-POP), and – most recently – fish (MENTOR-Fish) and bushmeat (MENTOR-Bushmeat) in Central Africa. MENTOR program graduates play important roles in government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as leading national leading training centers, conducting applied research to inform policy, and implementing innovative wildlife law enforcement efforts.

The MENTOR-POP (Progress on Pangolins) Program was a partnership between USFWS and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), who are both committed to investing in capacity building, training, and career development of emerging conservation leaders. Based in Yaoundé, Cameroon, this 18-month program (January 2016 – July 2017) developed a transdisciplinary team of nine early career Central African and Asian conservation practitioners to champion the conservation of pangolins in Central Africa. A similar partnership (MENTOR-Bushmeat) between the USFWS, ZSL, and the Central Africa Bushmeat Action Group (CABAG) was more recently launched to develop a trans-disciplinary Central African team with the tools, experience, and confidence to implement innovative interventions to tackle the illegal trafficking of protected species in the commercial bushmeat trade.

In the framework of the CBFP Wildlife Conservation Capacity Working Group, the USFWS in collaboration with ZSL and CABAG will hold a side event at the upcoming CBFP Council Meeting in Douala. During the side event, brief presentations will provide context on MENTOR-POP and MENTOR-Bushmeat, and an informal roundtable discussion will solicit sharing of ideas and experiences on long-term capacity development.

## Goals of the Side Event

- Share the experience of the MENTOR-POP program for feedback from participants
- Introduce the new MENTOR-Bushmeat program and exchange ideas on implementation
- Raise awareness about the critical need to fund long-term capacity development programs

## Organizers

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