



Pandrillus Cameroon

Cameroon Charity no: 034/G.37/D14/VoIII/SAAJP | US EIN: 93-1289932
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3 June 2020

LIMBE WILDLIFE CENTRE ESTABLISHES EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN TO COMBAT THE THREAT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ACTION PLAN TO KEEP OUR 455 ANIMALS AND 40 STAFF SAFE DURING THIS CRISIS

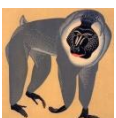
The novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic has swept across the world, leaving no one untouched. The Limbe Wildlife Centre (LWC) is no exception. However, the wildlife rehabilitation and education centre, currently facing an unprecedented double-threat, has developed a plan to safeguard the project and the animals.

The representative of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF), Conservator MBELEN A RIM Serge stand against the virus: "We are taking the situation very seriously and are putting everything in place to protect our animals from contracting the virus. It is not cheap, it is not easy. But that is the most important concern of the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife to safeguard these animals that are the ambassadors of our natural heritage"

"For two months we have been closed, increased our biosecurity levels and boosted the immunity of our animals, especially our chimps and gorillas. But the virus still represents a double threat to both the health of our 40 staff and 455 animals and also our financial sustainability", stated the co-Manager, Peggy Motsch, representing the NGO Pandrillus, partner of the MINFOF. "So far, we have lost \$100,000 of income! Not only have we lost financial resources, but also we need more funds to face the consequences of the pandemic."

Over the past weeks, half the annual budget usually raised by the NGO Pandrillus to assist the government of Cameroon and support the LWC has been lost. Pandrillus' supporters are also facing a financial crisis as a result of the pandemic. To safeguard the LWC, respond to the double threat of the Covid-19 pandemic and continue conservation efforts, Pandrillus management established an Emergency Action Plan.

"Our primary concerns are human wellbeing and animal welfare. But conservation cannot stop, it is in our veins, it is our core mission. Poaching and trafficking most certainly have not stopped since the virus spread, they likely even increased", declares Ms Motsch. "The Emergency Action Plan will guide us to face the pandemic and its consequences on health, economy, social, animal and human wellbeing, and to pursue our conservation efforts to the best of our ability"



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The Emergency Action Plan consists of 5 actions, with a total budget of \$205,000 required for the rest of the year 2020.

ACTION ONE: PROTECTION & BIOSECURITY.

The LWC increased the level of biosecurity measures by upgrading sanitary protocols to protect both staff and animals. They are also strengthening the animals' immune systems to give them a better chance to fight illness, should they contract the virus. "We provide each animal with an enriched, high protein-energy diet supplemented by vitamins and tea", explains the resident veterinarian, Dr John Kiyang. "It will help reduce the effect and the extent to which the virus can spread within our population and will give us some more time to implement our contingency plan and isolate those that have been infected. But we are doing everything we can to prevent that from happening or the consequences may be devastating." Dr Kiyang details: "Respiratory diseases are always, along with parasites, the biggest threats to our animals. Biosecurity has always been a priority and the risk of disease transmission between humans and wildlife has always been taken seriously for humans and animals alike. The whole centre has been upgraded to a higher biosecurity level." Dr Kiyang to conclude: "Good hygiene, high immunity and professionalism are our best weapons"

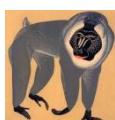
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Additionally, the LWC started composting all organic waste from the animal sections to produce high-quality fertilizer to increase food self-sufficiency. Other measures, awaiting funding, support social distancing by staff and family members by avoiding public transport and large gatherings.

ACTION TWO: SECURING ANIMAL CARE STANDARDS.

Internationally recognized for the quality of care provided to animals, the LWC prioritizes dietary requirements and enrichment to maintain animal welfare and strong group cohesion. But the animals also need regular medical check-ups, just like humans. "Nothing can be done without our experienced and dedicated staff", explains Ms Motsch. "They are committed to their animals and we, management, must secure their salary so that they can take care of their family alike". Faced with various crises beyond their control, such as the civil conflict in the South-West and North-West regions for the last 3 ½ years, the LWC continues to play a strong social role in mitigating socio-economic consequences on local community members.

ACTION THREE: SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES.



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LWC's social role extends beyond the staff and family. More than 500 individuals are beneficiaries of several green and business initiatives sponsored by the LWC. Led by community members from Batoke, a village neighbouring Mount Cameroon National Park. This venture was created to provide an alternative to those whose livelihoods depended on hunting and animal trading a way to shift to income generated by providing wild and domestic plants for the LWC primates. The result is a mutually beneficial partnership that sustainably alleviates local poverty and helps reduce encroachment and hunting. "We are concerned that if we lack funds to sustain this activity (1.2M FCFA per month), we might have to reduce or even put the project on hold. It will affect people's livelihoods and then it will reverberate negatively on nature. But, if we can maintain our support, people will, even more, recognize the economic value and services nature provides! This short circuit economy has been encouraged to protect the local community from the risks of being tied into a fragile global economy", explains Ms Motsch.

Through the last two actions, the LWC continues pursuing conservation, rehabilitation, education and inspiring the community.

3 **ACTION FOUR: SAVING THE AFRICAN GREY PARROT: CONSERVATION AND REHABILITATION**

Owing to the exceptional efforts made in the past few months to upgrade procedures and the facilities, the LWC has become the *de facto* national rescue and rehabilitation centre for African grey parrots saved from illegal trafficking. The LWC will soon initiate a pilot soft-release programme that will later be replicated nationwide. The released parrots will reinforce wild dwindling populations as a part of the national programme for the conservation of this endangered species led by the MINFOF. The programme aligns with the Government priorities in respect of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

The representative of the MINFOF, Conservator MBELEN A RIM Serge is hopeful: "The African grey parrot is strictly protected by our wildlife laws, it is one of the most emblematic species of Cameroon biodiversity, and the country, through the Limbe Wildlife Centre, was recently recognised internationally for the remarkable efforts made to help combat wildlife crime¹. Over the past 20 years, thousands of African grey parrots were rescued in support of confiscation operations. The soft-release programme represents a major step in following recommendations from the CITES through the cooperation of the MINFOF and partners to sustainably conserve the African grey parrot in Cameroon. We also hope and

¹ On 20 August, the Limbe Wildlife Centre received a 2019 Clark R. Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Award at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Geneva, Switzerland



work to help raise more awareness in the communities to engage them locally and nationally".

Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, Ms Motsch remains enthusiastic. "We are ready to start releasing the first flocks of African grey parrots. We are very excited about it, especially during this hard time. Our team is behind this effort and we look forward to the day when we release these birds. We need good stories to share around us and that will be a great one. As soon as the administration's go-ahead is granted, we will kick-start." "We are glad and proud to assist and support it!", declares Ms Motsch.

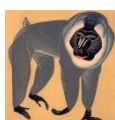
ACTION FIVE: EDUCATION & INSPIRATION

All of the LWC's education programmes, that reach thousands of children and adults each month, have been put on hold due to the pandemic. Education and inspiration are critical to the LWC conservation effort, especially during a time when human activities that are detrimental to wildlife have been directly linked to the pandemic. The LWC requires funds to conduct an educational campaign in tandem with the parrot release programme to raise Cameroonians' awareness of the illegality of capturing parrots, the importance of maintaining viable wild populations and community adherence the program. The campaign will include press releases, radio, TV, newspaper articles and large billboards.

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Second, Toh Bright, a young award-winning Cameroonian visual artist, whose work is internationally recognized, joined with the Limbe Wildlife Centre to help raise awareness about the value of ecosystems and change the perception of wildlife protection. "People do not really appreciate conservation. They hardly see that their wellbeing is correlated to wildlife conservation because the results of conservation are neither beneficial to local communities nor wildlife", he says. "Rural people genuinely understand what nature provides to them. They are aware that the forest and animals are threatened, that the climate is changing and that it affects them and their future. But they do not feel that they have a role to play and that they can do something about it. Urban people do not truly feel concerned, as they are pretty much disconnected from nature. We need to recreate this link and rethink the place of nature in our societies. Our culture is a powerful source of inspiration to pave a new way. I want my art to speak for myself, touch people to the heart and inspire them. It is with love and togetherness that we must act," he concludes.

Toh Bright's billboard art installations will be displayed in local communities. His work will illustrate the 4 main pillars of programmes conducted by the LWC to protect Cameroon's unique wildlife and improve human wellbeing.



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The Limbe Wildlife Centre is a conservation leader of the South-West region. They need your help to achieve these goals. Anyone who wishes to donate to the preservation and conservation of the LWC 455 rescued animals can do so at www.limbewildlife.org/donate

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