

Most of January I was in Guinea Bissau and Senegal working on a Chimpanzee project based on the principles of Ecosystem Management. Once back, I had a meeting with the leadership of the CEM fisheries group in Brussels where we discussed the Terms of Reference for this Group, which will need to be confirmed by the Steering Committee.

My first council meeting was preceded by a council retreat. Our new president Ashok Khosla is an inspirational chairman with a great sense of humour, capable of keeping everyone on track. The commission chairs got together the day before the retreat a/o to discuss future inter-commission activities. With this flash report I would like to share a number of highlights of these events with you.

#### *CEM matters:*

- Angela Andrade was accepted by council as the Deputy Chair of our Commission, Eddie Hegerl and Masse Lo as Steering Committee members. Congratulations! The choice for the last Steering Committee member will be not easy as I received a number of very good suggestions.
- I have been approached by a number of people for joint CEM activities:
  - Councilor Brahim Haddane from Morocco plans a workshop on the conservation of oasis in the Northern Sahara desert. A short note has been produced to be presented to potential donors.
  - With Kalev Sepp, councilor for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, I discussed a possible workshop on auditing of ecosystem products and services, to be held in Estonia.
  - President Ashok Khosla, who is a member of CEM, invites our commission to initiate an activity on nutrients, as often there are many nutrient losses impacting ecosystem functions.
  - The director of the IUCN-office Oceania invites us to identify CEM-activities in the region. Other regional offices that contacted me include our Washington, Mediterranean and Bangkok offices.
  - The Chair of CEESP – Mrs. Aroha Mead - invites all commission chairs to attend a CEESP meeting in New-Zealand in January 2011.
- Neville Ash, Head of the Ecosystem Management Programme and Focal Point for CEM, presented the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to the council. IPBES is supposed to develop into an international body on biodiversity and ecosystem service issues, comparable to IPCC. If this gets off the ground, IUCN should play a major role in this, with CEM and SSC to be leading constituents.
- Climate Change is the buzz word these days. The 15<sup>th</sup> conference of the Parties to UNFCCC in Copenhagen in December is an important event where IUCN, and especially CEM, should be present *and visible*. IUCN has two policy priorities in the context of the UNFCCC this year – on REDD as a mitigation option, and on ecosystem-based adaptation. There is significant potential for CEM to engage in both areas.
- 2010 is an important year because of the CBD CoP 10 in Nagoya (Japan). We should be getting ready for that as from now. It is good to know that Spencer Thomas, chair of SBSTTA, is an IUCN councilor.
- Jon Rodrigues, theme leader for the Red List of Ecosystems Group, has been appointed as Deputy Chair of the Species Survival Commission. Congratulations to him for this important task!
- Danone runs a Ramsar site in the French Alps where water infiltrates on its way to the Evian source. The company pays the local community for the ecosystem services delivered. We visited the area.

#### *General IUCN matters*

- I am member of the Council task forces on Biodiversity and Gender, on the IPBES initiative and on Climate Change.
- I proposed that IUCN should prepare a statement on the conservation of natural resources in relation to the current financial crisis. Many governments are stimulating their economies by making money available for new investments. These funds should go into green, innovative investments so that we reset our economies for a *sustainable* future.

#### *Commissions in general:*

- The DG promised that the secretariat would be more active on fundraising for commissions.
- Regional Councilors wanted easily accessible information on the commission members in their regions.
- All commissions noted the need to have a better representation in Africa. CEM is no exception.