

At this time of the year it can be cold at night, even in Guinea Bissau where my wife and I are staying to assist the staff of our Chimpanzee conservation project. The warmth we get here results from our work with the local stakeholders. We do see Chimpanzees every time more readily, but is that because of better protection or because they have fewer and fewer places to go to, where they concentrate and can be observed more easily? Nowadays we have telephone coverage in the Boé-sector, but internet is still far off. I apologize for sending this flash report late and for the cases that I might have missed.

CEM matters

We have over **eight hundred members** now. It is rewarding to notice that so many scientists and ecosystem managers like to be associated with our Commission which is a win-win situation for all of us.

There may not be too many concrete results to report over the last month, but our volunteer network is very active behind the screens. Now that we know which proposed events will be on the WCC-Jeju agenda¹, Steve Edwards is putting together a number of different “CEM-journeys through WCC-Jeju”; others are mobilising their CEM-network to ensure that their contribution to congress will be a success; for me, the oncoming period will be extremely busy: Mongolia, Mauritania, the Gulf States, IUCN-council and the last steering committee meeting before congress in Argentina, it will all have to be squeezed into my programme for the first trimester.

From the Thematic Groups

CEM’s contribution to the Durban Congress on Climate Change, was very well received. The brochure Angela Andrade and her network produced with [guidelines for Ecosystem based Adaptation to Climate Change](#) was in high demand. This is only one of the many examples where IUCN-commissions upgrade IUCN’s status and image in the world.

Members of CEM’s Thematic Group on Ecosystem Services commented upon the IPBES document that was drafted by IUCN-HQ.

From the Regions

On our way to Guinea Bissau - driving by car this time - we visited IUCN’s Mediterranean office in Malaga. With the Director and his staff we discussed opportunities for collaboration such as the oasis workshop in Mauritania and an IUCN-wide presentation about the importance of biodiversity conservation in Libya. I also learned that CEM Regional Chair Western Europe, Jabier Ruiz-Mirazo, is involved in an IUCN-sponsored study on the status of North Africa’s threatened grasslands.

Thanks to Marcos Valderrabano, who kindly offered us his house to stay in, we are able to cover the costs of the oasis workshop. Two CEM-members assist with the organisation: Monghi Sghaier from Tunisia and Mohamed Ould Kneyta from Mauritania itself.

The 2011 State of the Gulf of Mexico Summit took place in Texas in December. A [Briefing Paper](#) developed by CEM-North America & Caribbean was distributed that contained recommendations to U.S. environmental policy makers for restoring the long-term health of ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico. Many thanks to regional chair Steve Edwards and regional deputy chair Charlotte Moser for your work on this important topic

General IUCN-matters

IUCN is going through a difficult period. Some donors simply disappear, others fail to live up to their promises and biodiversity is under increasing threat almost everywhere. IUCN’s financial administration does not do what it is supposed to do, due to IT-problems. Commissions threaten to be victim of this situation, being punished for

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¹ Discussion is still going on about a number of decisions that are difficult to accept for some of us

careful financial management which a/o is “honoured” by withdrawing any payments made in 2011 for the next year of congress. I appeal to all Councillors - and all of them are commission members - to reward the commissions for their good work, and to support our sound financial management for the year 2012, the year of Jeju.