

A green monkey with a black face and chest is perched on a thick, textured tree trunk. The monkey is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a soft-focus view of other tree branches and foliage.

PASA

Pan African Sanctuary Alliance

2024 PASA Sanctuary Workshop

September 2024, South Africa

Executive Summary

The Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA), the largest association of wildlife centers in Africa, includes 23 organizations in 13 African countries. Our members are securing a future for Africa's primates by fighting the illegal wildlife trade, rescuing and rehabilitating orphans of the trade, educating the public, empowering communities, and protecting critical habitat. PASA strengthens our member organizations and works to build a global movement to save Africa's great apes and monkeys.

Each year, PASA organizes a three-day sanctuary workshop to bring together leaders of PASA's member organizations. This conference is crucial in allowing our members to increase the welfare of over 3,400 rescued animals in rehabilitation at PASA member centers by sharing their expertise, discussing challenges, building capacity, and joining forces to secure a future for Africa's primates. The combined knowledge of these 23 sanctuary leaders serves as an unparalleled resource at the conference, raising the capacity of each participating sanctuary to provide their animals with the very best care and protection in the wild.

The PASA Sanctuary Workshop (PSW) took place from 18th-22nd September 2024 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Representatives from 19 member sanctuaries were able to share expertise on a wide range of topics, with highlights including discussions and panels on wildlife conservation, disaster preparedness, reintroduction, primate welfare, staff training and management, fundraising and sustainability, and collaboration on new initiatives.

Sessions were also set aside for open discussion which allowed the members to share and discuss their most urgent challenges and their most impactful strategies for creating change. Post-conference surveys completed by participants confirmed the success of the workshop with attendees strongly agreeing that they gained useful knowledge in the realm of primate welfare and conservation and that the conference is essential for furthering the work of their organizations and the Alliance.

PASA is extremely grateful to the organizations and individuals who helped to fund this important conference, which has served as an important catalyst for future conservation and welfare work.



Highlights/Topics Covered

Before the workshop, PASA sent a survey to the sanctuary directors to prioritize topics for the conference, in order to ensure the conference agenda was informed by the needs and interests of member organizations. Based on their feedback, PASA chose the main agenda topics.

Community Engagement

The 2024 PASA Sanctuary Workshop was directly preceded by PASA's Community Engagement Workshop. This workshop brought together outreach personnel – responsible for community engagement and education at the sanctuaries – to share knowledge, discuss case studies, and receive training in best practices in community conservation. Topics covered at the workshop included case studies of community work from different sanctuaries, discussions of multimedia educational programs, techniques to measure behavior change, challenges faced during community engagement including human-wildlife conflict, cultural differences building trust with communities, and beliefs about primates that are held in different parts of Africa. Sessions were conducted as seminars, roundtables, and group sessions to encourage as much dialogue and knowledge sharing between members as possible.

This highly successful workshop lasted three days, with the final day overlapping with the PSW so that the outreach personnel could impart the lessons of the workshop directly to the sanctuary directors and attend sessions on ethical community engagement together. An external expert in Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) provided an overview of the subject and provided several resources that will help guide members as they ensure their conservation work is grounded in community consultation and ethical engagement. An education committee was also formed, including members from four different sanctuaries, to update the PASA Education Manual. This is a valuable and freely accessible resource for members throughout Africa, which helps them to follow best practices in community outreach and will be further updated by the committee over the next year.

Sanctuary Updates

At the beginning of the PSW, directors from each sanctuary shared a brief update on the work of their center since the previous conference. This was highly valuable as they were able to discuss the issues that had presented challenges over the past year and also share the successes that might provide valuable templates for other members facing similar challenges. These updates sparked a wide range of discussions and a dynamic exchange of expertise among members, getting to the essence of the Alliance and underscoring the irreplaceable benefits of in-person meetings for strategic problem-solving and collaborative growth.



Primate Welfare

A key theme of the PSW was a focus on improving welfare for primates in rehabilitation at the PASA member centers. Combined, PASA members care for over 3,400 primates, the vast majority of which are rescued from the illegal wildlife trade or other forms of cruelty and arrive at the centers with both physiological and psychological trauma. At the PSW, a number of sessions focused on primate welfare, with additional sessions also bringing in important aspects of animal welfare to the discussions (such as reintroduction and disaster preparedness). The PASA network holds a wealth of expertise in increasing positive welfare for these rescued animals through a whole range of techniques and care methods and ensuring that this expert knowledge is shared is a crucial role that PASA plays. Therefore, the attendees were presented with an overview of a recent Chimpanzee Caregiver workshop that was held at Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage in Zambia. Peggy Motsch from Chimfunshi shared the outcomes of the workshop, which saw chimpanzee caregivers from seven different sanctuaries gather together for a series of practical trainings, knowledge sharing, and informative seminars focusing on various aspects of chimpanzee care and welfare. This shared learning is central to PASA's mission and generated many discussions on additional ways in which caregivers, in particular, could gain further practical training with other members of the Alliance.

There was also a session dedicated to the issues of sanctuary intake management and expansion plans. As the illegal wildlife trade and deforestation devastate the continent's primates, more and more sanctuaries are finding themselves struggling with enough capacity to house and care for primates in need. This session discussed ways to manage intake levels to ensure optimum welfare for the primates already at the sanctuary while also sharing important steps when considering sanctuary expansion. These important discussions, including practical considerations and tips, were highly beneficial for PASA members to strategically plan for the future and ensure that they are doing the best that they can for the primates in need across Africa.

Fundraising and Communication

A central challenge to PASA members is how to achieve economic stability and connect with like-minded donors to fund their impactful conservation and welfare work. Therefore, a session at the PSW was dedicated to building the members' capacity to effectively fundraise and engage the public. This session included talks from experts across the PASA network on effective social media techniques, grant writing and management, and how to build a communications strategy that fits our digital age. This session provided valuable lessons and knowledge, as well as insights into ways that PASA can support our members in their public engagement and fundraising efforts.



Wildlife Conservation

In addition to primate welfare, conservation of wild primates is a key pillar of the work of PASA members across the continent. PASA member sanctuaries engage in a wide range of conservation activities, from fighting the illegal wildlife trade and working with law enforcement, to advancing One Health initiatives and leading campaigns to reduce the consumption of wildmeat. PASA's Head of Policy and Campaign, Iris Ho, led a panel discussion on the Alliance's unique role in primate conservation featuring speakers from four member sanctuaries that are each undertaking significant conservation activities in their region of operation.

Attendees heard details of a public awareness campaign led by Zach Schwenneker at Drill Ranch in Nigeria that aimed to reduce the consumption of primate meat and the associated public health risks. Torie Curr-Smith from Lilongwe Wildlife Center also led a discussion on the legal challenges and success of tackling illegal wildlife trafficking in Malawi. Nancy Mungania from Colobus Conservation shared the center's work to minimize primate deaths from electrocutions and traffic collisions in Kenya, while Itsaso Vélez del Burgo Guinea discussed the community work that the Lwiro Primates Rehabilitation Center has been conducting with local women, offering counselling support to women who have experienced sexual abuse and trauma during and following the civil unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The topics led to a wide-ranging discussion on different methods of wildlife conservation and community support that can be undertaken by centers, and provided important technical details on aspects of conservation that other members could implement in their own regions of operation. Overall, it was clear that collectively the Alliance is having a hugely significant impact on wildlife conservation in over a dozen African countries, working on the frontline of the primate conservation crisis and developing innovative and impactful programs to protect wild primates and the communities that live alongside them.

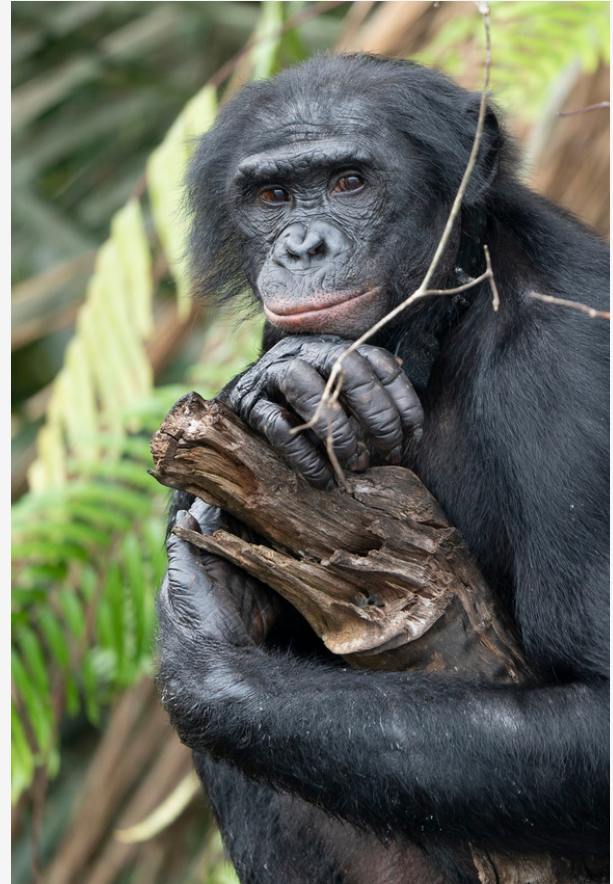


Reintroduction

Finally, an important and much-discussed topic this year was the reintroduction of primates from the sanctuaries back into the wild. Primate reintroductions – and particularly those done with apes - are highly specialized and difficult endeavors, and yet one that must be explored to their fullest extent in order to bolster conservation efforts and ensure the sustainability of sanctuaries. As a result, it was among the most requested topic of discussion in this year's pre-workshop survey.

At the PSW, speakers from Colobus Conservation in Kenya, Lola ya Bonobo in DR Congo, and Tchimpounga Chimpanzee Sanctuary in the Republic of Congo all spoke about their experiences in planning and reintroducing primates to the wild. Speakers discussed the preparations needed when planning reintroductions and gave details on different types of release methods and lessons that have been learned from successive reintroductions.

Importantly, the level of detail on reintroduction methods and this session created a lot of technical discussions and knowledge sharing that will be highly valuable to other members planning reintroductions with their own primates. Technical aspects of animal transportation, methods of post-release tracking, pre-release preparation and assessments, and welfare implications of reintroductions were all discussed at length, resulting in a highly productive session.



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Conference attendees visited Vervet Monkey Foundation to learn about the sanctuary and its efforts to rescue and rehabilitate wildlife. The tour was incredibly informative and allowed sanctuary directors to share ideas on rehabilitation techniques.



Disaster Preparedness

As the effects of climate change become more apparent across the world, the rate and severity of natural disasters, particularly across Africa, are increasing. PASA members in remote and vulnerable locations often bear the brunt of these disasters and have little access to the resources needed to withstand these extreme weather events. To increase preparedness and resilience to these events at member sanctuaries in vulnerable locations, we dedicated a session at this year's workshop to Disaster Preparedness. PASA members based in Kenya and Uganda presented detailed case studies of both flooding and droughts that had recently struck their sanctuaries.

Valuable lessons and practical measures to both prepare for and cope with these disasters were imparted, including the use of flood modeling during sanctuary building and repair, strategies for enclosure design that could minimize disruption during flooding events, and developing protocols to follow during disaster events. The presenters shared important, pre-emptive strategies to employ such as regular risk assessments, developing emergency response plans, and creating communications systems that can withstand the impacts of these disasters.

Every year, PASA fundraises for its Emergency Support Fund which helps members with immediate financial support in the aftermath of these disasters, and workshop attendees heard what a dramatic difference this has made to members affected by these extreme weather events. The session was extremely valuable in not only showing members the practical steps that can be taken to prepare for these events but also in highlighting the shared challenges faced by many members across the network and how sharing knowledge and resources can collectively build the Alliance's resilience to these events.



Fostering African Leadership

One of the key strategic goals for PASA is to recognize, celebrate and foster the development of African leadership in PASA member sanctuaries in order to support emerging conservation leaders. In 2016, PASA launched the Norm Rosen Leadership Development Grant to provide professional development opportunities for African nationals in management positions at PASA member wildlife centers. This prize provides funding for the winner to attend the PASA Sanctuary Workshop and to access bespoke professional development opportunities to support them on their path to becoming a conservation leader. The recipient of the 2024 Leadership Development Grant was Lucas Maluleke from Vervet Monkey Foundation, South Africa. Lucas has shown the utmost dedication to his work in vervet monkey conservation and is a role model for young Africans aiming to lead conservation efforts across the continent.



In addition, The Siddle-Marsden Award is presented every year to an African staff member of a PASA member wildlife center who exemplifies a commitment to primates, a commitment to conservation, and a commitment to excellence. This year, the award was won by Asuquo Nsa Ani from Drill Ranch in Nigeria. Asuquo is a drill caretaker at the sanctuary, caring for the more than 600 drills that are being rehabilitated and reintroduced at this site in rural Nigeria. Asuquo exemplifies the commitment, drive, and dedication that staff at sanctuaries show in order to ensure the care of their primates amid even the most difficult of circumstances. Accepting his award, Asuquo dedicated his award to the drills, stating that “they make me who I am today, I would be nobody without the drills. This award will give me more power and more energy to care for drills and other wildlife and I am overjoyed and full of excitement to receive this award.”

We are thrilled to be able to honor the dedication of these conservationists and to support the development of their careers as they work to protect the imperiled wildlife of Nigeria and South Africa.

Accomplishments

In order to ensure that the conference is as useful as possible to our members, PASA collects post-conference surveys from all attendees in which statements can be ranked from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and suggestions for future conferences can be shared. We were happy to receive very positive feedback from this year's attendees. The attendees agreed that:

The conference serves as a catalyst for unifying and aligning our work to protect primates (Mean score: 4)
I gained important current info related to primate conservation and welfare (Mean score: 4.2)
I will share some of the knowledge with my staff/co-workers (Mean score: 4.5).

Suggestions for future conferences included more time dedicated to discussing primate reintroductions, working with local communities, and fundraising. Many members shared how important it is to be a part of something bigger and to share information with likeminded organizations.



Special Thanks

The Pan African Sanctuary Alliance would like to thank the very generous organizations and donors that contributed to the 2024 PASA Sanctuary Workshop. The workshop would not be possible without their support. We would like to thank the following organizations for sponsoring this significant and valued event for Africa's primate conservation and protection community.



Appendix 1 - Attendees

Asuquo Nsa Ani, Siddle-Marsden Winner/Drill Ranch

Claire Willaume, PPG Gabon

Dani Keith, PASA staff

Dave Du Toit, Vervet Monkey Foundation

Dorothee Prak, Papaye International

Eric Willaume, Parc de la Lékédi

Etienne Charrière, Translator, PASA

Fanny Minesi, Lola ya Bonobo

Franck Chantereau, JACK Sanctuary

Fredrick Onyancha, Colobus Conservation

Iris Ho, PASA staff

Itsaso Velez del Burgo, Lwiro

Jeff Silver, PASA Board

Jenny Botting-van Blerk, PASA staff

Jerry Aylmer, Limbe Wildlife Centre

Jo Gaweda, Ape Action Africa

Joshua Rukundo, Ngamba Island

Kaitlyn Bock, PASA staff

Kelly O'Meara, PASA staff

Kenisha Archer, PASA staff

Liliana Pacheco, Wild Chimpanzee Foundation

Lilija Rapa, PASA staff

Lucas Maluleke, Leadership Grant Recipient/VMF

Martine van Schoor, Lilongwe Wildlife Centre

Marylin Pons-Riffet, Papaye International

Meg Gammage-Tucker, PASA Board

Michele Stumpe, PASA Board

Miguel Garcia, Speaker/ Translator, PASA

Nancy Mungania, Colobus Conservation

Nina Giotto, HELP Congo

Olga Feliu, Fundació Mona

Pauline Stuart, Chimp Eden

Peggy Motsch, Chimfunshi

Raphael Belais, Lola ya Bonobo

Rebeca Atencia, Tchimpounga

Rebecca Rose, PASA Board

Ruby Vise-Thakor, PASA staff

Samantha Dewhirst, CARE

Sebastian Louis, PASA Board

Stephen Ngulu, PASA Board/ Sweetwaters

Susana Pataro, JGI Global

Thomas Morgan, PPG Congo

Torie Curr Smith, PASA Board/Lilongwe

Zach Schwenneker, Drill Ranch



Appendix 2 - Agenda

Tuesday, September 17th:

Participants arrive in South Africa

Wednesday, September 18th:

CEW and Directors participate in morning sessions together

- 8:30 – 9:00am Welcome and opening remarks (Michele Stumpe and Kelly O'Meara)
- 9:00 – 9:30am Summary of CEW Workshop and Lessons
- 9:30 – 10:30am Working with Communities with Q&A – Steve Collins
- 10:30 – 11:00am Tea break + Merchandise tables
- 11:00 – 12:00pm Breakout sessions – one-on-one director/educator per each organization

Official start to PASA Member Workshop

- 1:30 – 3:30pm Updates from Members (5 minutes each)
- 3:30 – 3:45pm Siddie-Marsden Award + Norm Rosen Leadership Grant Recipient
- 3:45 – 4:00pm Tea break + Merchandise tables
- 4:00 – 6:00pm Private meeting for PASA members and PASA staff meeting

Thursday, September 19th:

- 8:30 – 9:00am Chimp Caregiver Workshop – Peggy Motsch from Chimfunshi
- 9:00 – 10:30am Engaging Donors
 - Social media engagement and imaging – Itsaso Vélez del Burgo from Lwiro
 - Building greater grant impact – Jenny Botting-van Blerk, PASA
 - Visual Communication Strategies for Digital Fundraising – Ruby Vise-Thakor, PASA
- 10:30 – 11:00am Tea Break, group photo
- 11:00 – 12:00pm Disaster Preparedness – Joshua Rukundo from Ngamba Island, Stephen Ngulu from Sweetwaters
- 1:15 – 3:15pm Latest on PASA
 - Operations manual and membership criteria updates – Peggy Motsch/Lilija Rapa/Kaitlyn Bock
 - Audit and grants through PASA – Dani Keith, PASA
 - Strategic plan update – Kelly O'Meara, PASA
- 3:15 – 3:30pm Tea Break
- 3:30 – 5:00pm The Alliance's unique role in primate and wildlife conservation: Iris Ho with a panel of PASA members
- 5:00 – 5:30pm Open discussion on topics of the day – question/answer

Friday, September 20th:

- 9:00 – 9:30am PASA Website Update – Ruby Vise-Thakor, PASA
- 9:30 – 10:30am Sanctuary Expansion/Managing Intakes – Jerry Aylmer from Limbe, Eric Willaume from Parc de la Lékédi
- 10:30 – 11:00am Tea break + Merchandise tables
- 11:00 – 12:00pm Training and managing staff – Torie Curr Smith from Lilongwe Wildlife Centre, Olga Feliu from Fundació Mona
- 1:30 – 3:00pm Planning and steps for reintroduction – Raphael from Lola ya Bonobo, Rebeca Atencia from Tchimpounga, and Nancy Mungania from Colobus Conservation
- 3:00 – 3:15pm Tea Break
- 3:15 – 4:00pm Open Discussion/ Question/Answer/New Topics
- 4:00 – 5:00pm Closing Remarks

Saturday, September 21st:

- 6:30 – 7:30am Breakfast and check out of hotel
- 7:30am Participants leave for visit to Vervet Monkey Sanctuary

Sunday, September 22nd:

- 6:30 – 7:30am Breakfast and departure back to Johannesburg for flights home