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Geographic

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main story

6 GIANT SABLE EMERGES FROM THE ASHES OF WAR

Scientists recently found Angola's near-mythical giant sable alive and well after decades of civil war – just one reason why this country deserves the conservation community's attention.



RICHARD D. ESTES



artists for AWF, page 12

A MESSAGE FROM AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION:

CREATING LEADERS FOR WILDLIFE PROTECTION

AWF's longstanding commitment to leadership development is one of the great hallmarks of 45 years of service to ensure that Africa's wildlife and wild lands endure forever.

To provide real leadership, one must work to equip others for the role – at the national level, within local communities and among private landholders. A lasting commitment from all stakeholders is necessary to protect, connect and sometimes restore the interconnected lands that are needed to sustain Africa's remarkable wildlife populations and that have the potential to uplift the people who live around them.

In these special places, which we call Heartlands, AWF has always sponsored the development of leadership by equipping the people of Africa with the educational skills needed to manage their own lands for conservation. Our Charlotte Fellowship program continues to grow and build on its legacy – it has trained more than 3 000 conservation professionals that live and work in Africa since AWF was founded in 1964.

In the coming year, we will focus on Mozambique – a place of great importance in the development of living Heartlands in southern Africa. We welcome your support in our efforts to improve conservation

odds in Mozambique by training conservation professionals and promoting park development and ecotourism enhancements.

We are equally devoted to building AWF as a leader for collaboration within the conservation community. For example, we are proud of our science-based conservation process and rigorous program evaluation methods, which we owe to ongoing collaboration with The Nature Conservancy.

We have other partnerships with tourist operators and wildlife artists, and a new conservation coffee

project with Starbucks. In all cases, we work to ensure that conservation benefits local communities.

Finally, we wish to partner with financial leaders – people who want to invest in the conservation of a continent and who recognize the impact that dollars spent on African conservation can have. All of us who know and love Africa want to help conserve its wildlife and wild places.

Protecting these incredible resources is key to a promising future for Africa. Together, we can make it happen.

Patrick J. Bergin, PhD
President & CEO



“To provide real leadership, one must work to equip others for the role”

- 12 ARTISTS FOR AWF**
John Banovich's work draws a viewer into the animal's habitat, capturing the nuances of its personality and mood. No wonder then that he is one of the United States's most acclaimed wildlife artists.
- 14 AWF TRAVEL**
Ecotourism – travel with an ethic.
- 15 AWF DONORS**
Africa's wildlife needs everyone's help, and here's one young donor who got the message loud and clear.



COVER
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xxxxxxx
Photographer: xxxxxxxx



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CRAIG R. SHOLLEY

Africa Geographic regulars & features

- X AROUND AFRICA**
- X HEAVEN... AND A HINT OF HELL**
Logging, poaching and chronic regional instability are just some of the reasons why the Central African Republic has not featured on many 'Top 10 Safaris' lists. But after a recent visit to a transfrontier conservation initiative, John Maytham believes that could be changing.
- X HURRAH FOR HARAR**
Every now and then you find yourself in a place that brings out the chameleon in you, one that lets you see the world through different eyes for a day or two. Ethiopia's holiest Islamic city, Harar, is one of those places.
- X SEIZING THE MOMENT**
The Great Apes Survival Project
In a last-ditch attempt to ensure the future of man's closest relatives, UNEP and UNESCO have launched GRASP – the Great Apes Survival Project. Charlie Furniss examines what it's up against.
- X KEEP OUT!**
For almost 100 years, Namibia's diamond-rich Sperrgebiet has been off-limits – with the result that the region's wildlife and unique vegetation have flourished in a near pristine state. Thomas P. Peschak was permitted to explore this wilderness.
- X ONE LION, THREE ELAND AND A GRUMPY BUFFALO...**
Counting wildlife in Mana Pools National Park
For most of the year, elephants and hyaenas outnumber human visitors to Zimbabwe's Mana Pools National Park. But every September, some 200 volunteers descend on the place to count animals. Helen Patchett was there...
- X INTO AFRICA**

THE MIND'S EYE

John Banovich's work draws a viewer into the environment and milieu of the animals' habitats. Unlike more commonplace portraiture, John's art captures the nuances of each animal's personality and mood, enabling the viewer to be involved with the subject in a personal way.



John's artistic portrayal of lions is unparalleled, as is his passion for Africa's largest cat. Consequently, in collaboration with AWF, he has created the PRIDE Initiative to help ensure its future.

THE PRIDE INITIATIVE

John Banovich's passion and concern for all the wildlife and remote landscapes of Africa is immense, but of all the magnificent creatures on this vast continent, the African lion is the species with which he most identifies.

'Lions are iconic animals, symbolizing so much to so many people around the world. Both past and present civilizations have immortalized the spirit of the lion and it has become a symbol of the admirable traits we humans embrace.'

Numbering well over 100 000 only several decades ago, the African lion population is now estimated at around 25 000. This disturbing decline is a result of habitat loss, increased human/lion conflict and poaching throughout the lion's range. Viable lion populations are being pressured to live in confined areas, increasing the chance of conflict with people and reducing opportunities for genetic exchange.

To address the threats to the African lion's future, John founded The P.R.I.D.E. initiative (Protection, Research, Implementation, Development, and Education) – a program designed to raise awareness about lion conservation, assemble a comprehensive strategy that transcends borders in those places where lions live and implement a science-based, ground-level conservation effort.

As AWF understands the importance of wildlife in intact ecosystems and recognizes the importance of people and the need for sustainable community development that delivers tangible benefits to those people, it was a natural progression to partner with John on The P.R.I.D.E. initiative and implement the project's directives.

For more information, visit www.awf.org or www.johnbanovich.com

John Banovich is one of the most acclaimed wildlife artists in the United States and his art is also widely appreciated by many international collectors. He specializes in large oil canvases of Africa's wildlife, but his work is inspired by subjects from all the continents of the globe. John is talented, prolific and dedicated – both to his art and to preserving the wild places where the animals live. To this end, he has partnered with AWF to create the Pride Initiative – a conservation-awareness and fund-raising effort that focuses specifically on preserving Africa's largest and most social of cats – the African lion. (See Pride Initiative box.)

John began sketching images of wildlife while growing up in the copper-mining town of Butte, Montana. As a youth, he painted animals on antlers and fashioned them into bolo ties, earrings and belt buckles. These were inspired by the elk, deer and other wild animals that his father hunted. At the age of 10, he sold his first oil painting.

In 1982, John went to the University of Montana, intending to double major in zoology and art. However, when he discovered that abstract art was encouraged more than realism in his art classes, he left the school and moved to



John is seen here participating in a lion-collaring project that will assist in expanding our knowledge of lion behavior and ecology.



In 'Black Thunder', John has created a painting that expresses the emotional power and primitive beauty of the black rhinoceros – one of Africa's most endangered large mammals.

Seattle, Washington. There he received a degree from the Art Institute of Seattle in graphic design in 1987.

In the late 1980s, capitalizing on years of competitive body building and power lifting, John began working as a personal trainer and fitness expert. It was also around this time that he renewed his interest in wildlife and began to paint again. In 1993, as a virtual unknown, his miniature oil painting of two lionesses won the Best of the Show in Seattle's prestigious Pacific Rim Wildlife Art Show. After tremendous press coverage and signing with a publisher, he found the confidence to pursue art full-time. Soon after selling his personal training business, he embarked on his first safari to the Okavango Delta in Botswana and fell in love with Africa's wildness. John passionately states that 'Africa moved me

beyond words. I wanted to soak it up, every last drop – its enormous diversity, extreme beasts and ancient rhythms. It ignited a fire in my soul and I knew I would never be the same.'

John approaches his work in a similar way to a film director arranging a set in order to express the underlying emotion. 'What's most important is not what you put in, but what you leave out. To me, less is more.' Instead of painting things, he paints the essence of things. He is privileged to have studied wildlife around the globe – often spending months each year in the world's wildest places. However, of all earth's special places, Africa continues to have the greatest allure and he returns regularly to the Okavango Delta, the vast plains of the Serengeti and the montane forests of central Africa.

John recognizes both the uniqueness

and the fragility of the world he paints and emphasizes that 'today we are living during an extraordinary time, poised between the old world and the new. The human and animal conflict is raging, and is now escalating to the point where the decisions we make today will seal the fate of wildlife for generations to come.'

John passionately states, 'Now more than ever, we need to expand the message about the vital importance of the world's natural places and utilize the forceful role that artists can leverage in the efforts to conserve them.' Over the years, Banovich has worked with a variety of organizations, raising thousands of dollars for conservation and humanitarian causes. As an artist and a very concerned conservationist he hopes that his art will inspire us to protect our wildlife and ensure its survival.