

2022 WCN Career Participants

This is the first cohort of the Career Program, bringing 6 early to mid-career conservationists from 6 different countries in Africa. To support their growth journey, WCN will provide participants with up to 3 years of financial support, tailored access to individual training, capacity-building, and workshop opportunities, and facilitated peer learning and mentorship.



Aristide Takoukam Kamla (Cameroon) - African Manatee

Aristide Takoukam Kamla is the founder and CEO of African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization (AMMCO). A marine biologist by training, Aristide studied Animal Biology and Marine Wildlife Ecology and Management at Cameroon's University of Dschang, and earned his Ph.D from the University of Florida on African manatee genetics, diet, habitat characterization, and modeling. His goals as a Career Program participant include to better understand drivers of effective marine wildlife conservation in Cameroon, political and economic decision-making factors, improve fundraising, promote ecotourism as an income source, establish the first African manatee rehabilitation center in Lake Ossa, and support the next generation of African marine conservationists.

Bridget Mayani (Zambia) - Lions

Bridget Mayani is a Wildlife Ecologist who works for the Zambian Carnivore Programme in South Luangwa National Park. She has a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Management from the Copperbelt University. Her day to day focus is on Wildlife Research and Monitoring Techniques, including radio telemetry, large carnivore Immobilization, GIS, wildlife telemetry, and data analysis as well as conservation outreach. Her goals for the Career Program are to design and implement curriculum for conservation clubs, to continue promote conservation internship programs for secondary school graduates and undergraduates, to obtain a Masters Degree in Ecology, and overall get a sense of direction and management for her career in conservation.



Cecile Kayitanirwa (Rwanda) - Grey Crowned Crane

A botanist at Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association (RWCA). Cecile has a Bachelor of Science in Biology, with honors in Botany and Conservation, from University of Rwanda as well as a Master of Science in Plant and Fungi Taxonomy, Diversity and Conservation from Queen Mary University of London and Royal Botanic Gardens. She is a specialist at plant and fungi identification, plant nursery care, seed harvest, and storage, specifically dedicated to habitat restoration for grey crowned cranes and other Rwandan wildlife. As a participant in WCN's Career Program, she aims to establish a seed bank specifically to promote indigenous tree species restoration in Rwanda, map mature indigenous trees that can be used for ongoing seed harvest, engage women at sites around the country, training them as 'Seed Champions' and paying them for the collection of indigenous tree seeds to supply RWCA's nursery and support their livelihoods.





Dominique Gonçalves (Mozambique) - African Elephant

Dominique Gonçalves is a Wildlife Ecologist and manager of Gorongosa National Park's Elephant Ecology Project in Mozambique. Dominique investigates elephant movement and range expansion in relation to habitat use and human-elephant conflict. She hopes to build coexistence between communities and wildlife throughout the buffer-zone surrounding the park. In addition to this, Gonçalves works closely with Girls' Club programs, promoting conservation education and women's health. She is currently a Ph.D student of Ecology at University of Kent in the United Kingdom. As a Career Program participant, Dominique's goals are to build a strong autonomous voice in conservation in Mozambique and Africa, develop high impact research that influences conservation management and policy in protected areas through scientific work and trust to lift communities out of poverty, revive communities' stewardship and ownership of biodiversity, encourage long term support in conservation, address conservation and human wildlife conflict, and ensure conservation of endangered species such as the African Elephant.

James Watuwa (Uganda) - African Elephant and *Leptopelis karissimbensis* (Frog)

James Watuwa is a Wildlife Veterinarian, the founder of Endangered Wildlife Conservation Organization (EWCO), and also works at the Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Center. James has a Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Medicine as well as Master's of Science Degree in Wildlife Health and Management, specializing in wildlife clinical medicine, from Makerere University. He is a specialist at wildlife translocations, animal nutrition, and clinic monitoring. His goals for WCN's Career Program are to lead the wildlife veterinary component of the implementation of human carnivore conflict mitigation around Queen Elizabeth National Park, provide rescue response efforts throughout the country, participate in de-snaring activities at Murchison Falls National Park, and obtain a PhD in Wildlife Ecology. He would also like to publish some of his scientific writing, improve on donor engagement, and peer to peer learning



Jessicah Kurere (Kenya)- Lions, Hyenas & Wild Dogs

Jessicah Kurere is a Veterinarian, who works at Ewaso Lions in Kenya, under a Community Animal Health Initiative Program. She has a Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Medicine from the University of Nairobi. She is a specialist in animal disease surveillance and clinical monitoring, animal deworming and vaccination, and animal nutrition. Her goals for WCN's Career Program are to establish a database of diseases for dogs and cats in Northern Kenya, especially those at risk in spreading to wild carnivores, develop partnerships with the Veterinary Departments in Northern Kenya in developing and implementing policies in managing animal health challenges, create networks for future collaboration to address wildlife conservation challenges, and balance work and rest to prevent burn out.