

# GNF Newsletter

Living Lakes - Lebendige Seen - Lagos Vivos - Живые озера

## Preface

### Kenya in trouble

Burning shacks, people running for dear life and bloody street fights between rivalling ethnic groups: Within a few days Kenya turned into a trouble spot. Many Kenyans challenge the re-election of President Mwai Kibaki who is a member of the ethnic group of Kikuyu. Militias and members of the opposition like the Luo and the Luhya were battling fiercely. The troubles are partly home-made by political leaders that favoured members of their own ethnicity when there was an open vacancy in the administration. This practice had widened the gap between the more than 50 different ethnic tribes which are living in Kenya.

Even the spectacular beaches along the east coast near Mombasa are deserted. Tourism and national parks that are most important for Kenyan economy suffer massively from the conflict. The monetary loss for Kenya in tourism businesses this year is estimated to be up to one billion Euro. Beside the absent foreign visitors many environmental

and humanitarian aid programmes came to a standstill. Therefore poor people are suffering most.

Also the projects of Global Nature Fund are affected by those circumstances. Severe difficulties and delays occurred during the resumption of the Kenyan drinking water and solar lamps projects. As a result GNF is thinking about the integration of peace keeping and supporting instruments into the projects. All ethnic groups are facing the same enemy: lack of adequate water and food for human consumption as well as lack of education and medical care.

Hopefully, the efforts of former UN secretary general Kofi Annan will be successful and a national reconciliation will restore peace in the country.

Kind regards



Udo Gattenlöhner  
Executive Director

### Mahakam Wetland is Threatened Lake of the Year 2008

One generation before the Indonesian ancient forests were largely unharmed. They have hosted one of the ecologically most valuable habitats world wide and stored lots of carbon dioxide. For years the demand for raw materials increased world wide and caused deforestation and slash-and-burn in the primeval forests as well as draining of swamps. The natural vegetation was replaced by large-scale agricultural monocultures. Primarily palm oil is grown. The oil is a valuable resource for cosmetic products, food and biofuel and it is highly demanded in industrialised countries. Excessive slash-and-burn causes massive CO<sub>2</sub>

emissions and therefore an acceleration of climate change. It also effects the loss of the unique biodiversity. Animals die in burning forests or flee noisy power saws. Large clouds of smoke affect human health. Habitats are irreversibly destroyed. It is impossible to retreat in original areas. Long-term monocultures degrade the soil and leave devastated territories behind.

### Mahakam Wetland in danger

Middle Mahakam Region (MMR) covers an area of 8,100 sq. km and is one of the largest wetlands in Kalimantan on Borneo. It contains three large and 30 smaller lakes as well as large-scale peat bogs and freshwater marshes.

## 1/2008

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Many fish species are living there. The whole territory is an important reservoir of fish and drinking water. The rare Irrawaddy Dolphin inhabits the region with a population of about 70 individuals. Danielle Krebs, scientific staff of our partner organisation RASI affirms that 90 % of the original wetland forests in MMR have been destroyed through forest fires and (legal and illegal) deforestations. In some areas the primeval forest recovers though not in places where there have been oil palm plantations. For hundreds of years people lived in the region and with its resources. Today many of them struggle maintaining their living.

### Supporting Sustainability

Today oil palm trees cover an area of 6.5 million hectares in Indonesia and additional three million hectares are approved for the regions Papua and Kalimantan. The Ministry of Forestry is not willing to take further actions saving the ancient forests. The authorities claim to preserve the natural resources well enough. At least RASI reports that licences for logging and mining are supposed to become harder to receive. On the same time control mechanisms are still lacking. It is important to persuade Indonesian authorities to maintain and use the precious ecosystems in a sustainable way. Therefore an effective certification system and less support for fuel made out of palm oil is required.

Global Nature Fund and its local partner organisation RASI (Conservation Foundation for Rare Aquatic Species of Indonesia) have declared Mahakam wetland as **Threatened Lake of the Year 2008** and call for an immediate stop of clear cutting. In close cooperation with RASI GNF supports sustainable land use activities in the region and puts a second emphasis on long-term protection of endangered species such as the Irrawaddy Dolphin.



### International Conference „Business and Biodiversity“

GNF and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH will host the international conference „Business and Biodiversity“, which will take place in Bonn, Germany on April 2 and 3, 2008.

Around 200 participants from the business sector, research institutes, NGOs and governmental authorities are expected to attend this two day conference. Day one will explore business opportunities and business risks related to the use and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity. Day two will focus on tools and practical examples in relation to the implementation of corporate biodiversity management.

Speakers will include representatives from companies and organisations such as Unilever, Novartis Pharma, Mondi, Deloitte, UNEP Finance Initiative and Friends of the Earth Europe.

More information at:

[www.globalnature.org/bio-div](http://www.globalnature.org/bio-div)

Conference supporters are the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with funds from the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety; the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) as well as the Foundation Internationale Begegnung of the Sparkasse in Bonn.

### Across Southeast Asia for Living Lakes by rickshaw

Travelling in Southeast Asia is nothing extraordinary in times of globalisation. However, 31yearold Thomas Bauer, journalist and Goethe Institute staff member from Germany, had chosen an unusual vehicle. For 40 days he cycled with a rickshaw from Hanoi, Vietnam via Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia to Singapore. At the end he did 3,500 km when he arrived in Singapore on February, 11. Along his way Thomas Bauer visited Asian lakes and met potential future partners for the international Living Lakes network.

Songkhla Lake is Asia's second largest lagoon lake with a total area of 1,040 sq. km. It is located on the Malay Peninsula in the southern part of Thailand. The lake has a small opening to the Gulf of Thailand and the lake waters range from estuarine to freshwater. Many waterfowl and rare

species such as - Irrawaddy Dolphin live there. In order to extend the availability of freshwater for agriculture a large dam was built to cut off the salt water intrusion into the lake. In combination with fixed fishing gear the dam has effectively cut off any passage in or out of the lake for fish, and also for the threatened Irrawaddy Dolphin. Additionally, intensive agriculture using high amounts of water and chemicals, wastewater intrusion from local industries, upland forest logging causing erosion and the high water demand of 1.8 million people living and working in the region are putting pressure on Songkhla Lake's natural resources and the access to drinking water.

Mr Ratanachai and his students in close cooperation with non-governmental organisations inform the local inhabitants about the unsustainable practices, told Thomas Bauer from Thailand. He met Chatchai Ratanachai, advisor for Environmental Management at Prince of Songkhla University, in the beginning of February in Hat Yai at Lake Songkhla. The



university operates as contact point for 15 local environmental NGOs and provides scientific background information as well as coordinatory and mediatory skills. Several round table meetings between local initiatives and businessmen were organised to raise awareness for the threats and to discuss sustainable alternatives. The implementation of two bird protection areas and the declaration of Kuan Ki Sian Wetland (northern part of Songkhla Lake) as an internationally important and sensitive area are among the success stories. Thanks to the personal exchange between Thomas Bauer and Chatchai Ratanachai, actions are now taken to include Lake Songkhla into the Living Lakes network. GNF looks forward to welcoming a new country in the international network and to expand its help in lake protection to another Asian partner.

Thomas Bauer has undertaken several extraordinary journeys before his trip across Southeast Asia. He followed the Danube in a kayak for 2,000 km to the Black Sea. He walked St. James Way and travelled 69 days from the City of Constance in Germany to Santiago de Compostela, a Spanish town famous for its pilgrims. Many of his travel impressions are recorded in his books. For further informations in German see: [www.literaturnest.de](http://www.literaturnest.de)

## Briefly noticed:

### **GNF President was awarded the Trophee de Femmes Environmental Prize**

GNF President Marion Hammerl was honoured for her voluntary engagement in

the international Living Lakes network by receiving the first prize from the Yves Rocher Foundation. The award ceremony took place in Stuttgart, Germany, on February, 15. For six years the Yves Rocher Foundation prizes remarkable women and their exceptional dedication in environmental and nature conservation fields. This year the three nominated German women got a total trophy money of 18,000 EUR. The third prize went to Ms Ingrid Schaller, founder of the nature farm Faßmannsreuther Erde, for her engagement in cultivation of herbs and trees. The second prize was given to Ms Eva-Maria Epple from Berlin who started the project "20 green main roads in Berlin". In March 2008, Marion Hammerl will have the possibility to attend a big celebration in Paris, France, where the national winners meet and international laureates will be awarded for conservation activities.

## **Educational tour to Jordan Valley**

The German travel agencies SK Tours and Yoram Ehrlich Reisen organise a ten-day study trip on May, 18 – 28 exploring the Jordan Basin. The organisers put an emphasis on the topics Policy and Water. The participants will have the opportunity to visit water and conservation projects of the Living Lakes partner Friends of the Earth Middle East. Beside sites at the Dead Sea there are excursions scheduled to Lake Galilee, to the Jordanian capital Amman and to Jerusalem. For more information contact GNF or Yoram Reisen (phone: 0049 (0) 681 585 360; email: [info@mein-isreal.de](mailto:info@mein-isreal.de)).



## **Experiences from Reisepavillon 2008**

Once again Global Nature Fund (GNF) and its partners promoted sustainable tourism in lake regions at Germany's unique trade fair for alternative travel. For the first time the Reisepavillon was organised in Stuttgart in combination with Europe's largest holiday fair "Caravan, Motor und Toristik (CMT)".

In 2008, the Reisepavillon put an emphasis on tourism and water – recreation and holidays at lake-river-sea. With representatives of Living Lakes partners from Germany, Italy and Russia GNF informed visitors and experts about its projects concerning sustainable tourism. Igor Sysuev from Firn Travel at Lake Baikal could be met personally and promoted environmentally friendly

travel offers in the Baikal region, Siberia. At Lake Baikal the protection of the endemic Baikal seal, locally referred to as Nerpa, is supported by GNF and Anton Ehrmann-Stiftung. The travel destination Lake Trasimeno received high approval and was represented by the Italian Province of Perugia that was admitted as full member of Living Lakes network in 2006. At Lago di Trasimeno the 12th Living Lakes Conference will be held this year in September. Lake Constance Foundation and Ecocamping, the German association of eco-friendly camping sites, have been competent contact persons for sustainable tourism activities in the Lake Constance region for interested visitors. Marion Hammerl, GNF President and Executive Director of Lake Constance

Foundation, reported within the programme for professionals about experiences in the development of nature tourism in lake regions of the Living Lakes Eastern Europe network. She also spoke about projects related to the improvement of water quality, and regional management to preserve lake regions in a sustainable way.

Young visitors were invited to take part in our photo competition at the GNF information booth. In front of huge pictures of a tuocan and a caiman from the Pantanal wetland in Brazil the kids were encouraged to pose in funny ways. The most wittiest photo won the beautiful photo collection of the Pantanal from Günter Ziesler and Angelika Hofer.

## Events

**Conference „Business and Biodiversity“**, April 2 – 3, 2008. Hosts: GNF and GTZ, Venue: Deutsche Welle, Bonn, Germany;

[www.globalnature.org/bio-div](http://www.globalnature.org/bio-div)

**9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP9)** to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), May 19 – 30, 2008 in Bonn, Germany; [www.cbd.int/cop9](http://www.cbd.int/cop9)



**Fokus Natur, September, 12 – 14, 2008:** For the second time the fair for nature observation will be held in Radolfzell, Germany, including workshops, presentations and excursions. Suppliers of optical, photographic and trekking stuff and conservationists will meet at Lake Constance. For information see: [www.fokusnatur.com](http://www.fokusnatur.com)

**12<sup>th</sup> Living Lakes Conference**, Sept. 22 – 27, 2008, Topic: „Linking Cultural Landscape Values to Lake Protection“ and 10-years **Living Lakes** anniversary celebration at Lake Trasimeno, Italy

## Travelling exhibition “Pantanal – a natural paradise in danger“

8 February to 6 April 2008, Zoo of Osnabrück, Germany; 7 April to 30 May 2008, Zoo of Heidelberg, Germany; 1 to 22 June 2008, Centre of Otters in Hankensbüttel, Germany; 23 June to 31 August 2008, Zoo of Cologne, Germany

## Publications and Online-Resources

### Nature, Agriculture and the Price of Water in Israel

Friends of the Earth Middle East published a new report which highlights the direct connection between the amount of water used by agriculture in Israel and the price farmers pay for water. It calls for a rethinking of the social priorities in Israel while advancing the public debate on the rehabilitation of ecological systems. More:

[www.foeme.org/publications.php?ind=21](http://www.foeme.org/publications.php?ind=21)

### Business and Biodiversity

This 24 pages publication (only in German) by the German Environmental Umbrella Organisation DNR informs about the current controversial debate on biodiversity conservation by corporates. Download from [www.globalnature.org/bio-div](http://www.globalnature.org/bio-div)

## Blue Gold

European Water Partnership (EWP) has established a new discussion forum dealing with water issues. Access to EWP website: [www.ewp.eu](http://www.ewp.eu) (see Blue Gold)

## Living Lakes Survey:

### Adaptation to Climate Change

Results of a survey carried out among the Living Lakes Partners by GNF are available from [www.globalnature.org/Wissenspool](http://www.globalnature.org/Wissenspool). Key issues were: Existing awareness and measures in relation to adaptation to climate change in lake and wetlands areas.

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