

July - August 2008

Editorial

There is no longer any doubt that biodiversity is the master key to our future. Balancing the ecosystem has always been a major consideration for rural stakeholders, allowing us to enjoy not only the fruits of the land but also its many services both to the environment, landscape, culture and society.

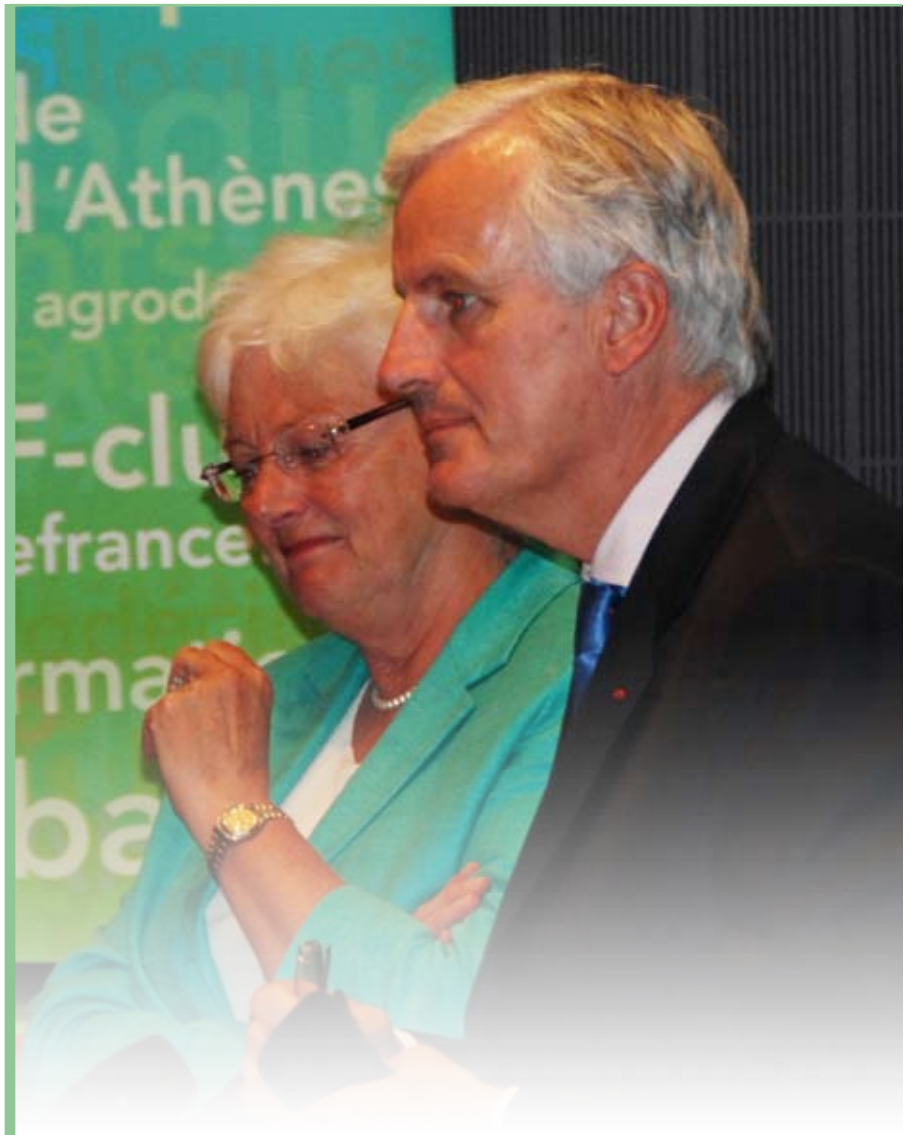
For most of this time it was taken for granted as having unlimited potential, but biodiversity has fluctuated as human activity has developed. The action of environmental associations has focused the attention of politicians and the public on the potential risks of a decline of biodiversity and of climate change. Even though there is a very full political agenda on this subject the initiatives of private landowner associations are crucial. ELO has therefore signed "Countdown 2010", a campaign launched by IUCN in 2004 during the Malahide conference intended to stop the decline of biodiversity by 2010, and is also participating in the Business and Biodiversity initiative (B@B).

The 9th Biodiversity Convention in Bonn in May 2008 (COP9) allowed our AFN colleagues who represent the main German rural landowner associations to present their initiatives to promote sustainable management, such as the multi-flowers project of the farmers, the wildlife counting project of the hunters and the evaluation and planting of specific plant varieties. These movements show how involved the countryside is in applying necessary, constructive and efficient solutions.

ELO is currently analysing the interaction between agriculture and biodiversity, which are two sides of the same coin. We are convinced that local solutions will allow both to benefit from each other.

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE

General Assembly of ELO in Paris



ELO (European Landowners' Organization), of which SAF is a member, held its General Assembly in Paris on 10th and 11th of June.

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As a European federation of national associations representing the interests of agricultural businessmen and rural land owners, its main objective is to use the dynamic character of private property and innovative activities on those properties to promote a prosperous countryside. Its work focuses in particular on topics related to the environment, renewable energy, agriculture and rural life. ELO is a source of highly influential proposals in the Brussels institutions. Because of its area of work it traditionally holds its general assembly every six months in the country holding the presidency of the European Union. For the NGO this is a good way of gaining information about the presidency's programme with respect to farming and environmental issues and of publicizing its proposals.

With some thirty delegates representing most of the countries of the European Union, the general assembly tackled various subjects (Natura 2000, biofuels, GMOs etc.) before looking more closely at the document on ELO's vision of the challenges facing the countryside and agriculture in the 21st century. This document was submitted to the European agriculture commissioner Mrs Mariann FISCHER BOEL and to the minister of agriculture Michel BARNIER at the SAF general assembly on 10 June (and is accessible on the ELO website www.elo.org).

A very European round table

SAF agriculteurs de France treated Mrs FISCHER BOEL to a mini tour of Europe and the concerns of the different countries with respect to the CAP health check. This round table was organized as part of the annual convention. Five farmers and experts – British, Austrian, German, Irish and Lithuanian - each spoke to the commissioner in turn. The diversity of the issues raised highlighted the difficulty of reconciling different interests within a dynamic European agricultural policy which is productive while respecting the environment. Mariann FISCHER BOEL recalled that the health check was not a new reform but the fruit of a compromise between the 27 member states, based on the 2003 reform.

SAF took the opportunity of submitting its complete report on the competitiveness of farming and made proposals to produce more and better, to adapt the regulatory environment and strengthen sectors and geographical territories in order to make French farming competitive again. SAF believes these proposals urgently need to be implemented since the world population is growing and will need to be fed. The world continues to open up, exposing all kinds of economic operators to competition, including within Europe. There is also urgency due to the productivity indicators, such as for example the yield of arable crops, which has been stagnating for several



Allan BUCKWELL (UK); Michael Prinz zu SALM-SALM (DE); Charles KEANE (IRL); Mariann FISCHER BOEL; Hervé MORIZE (FR); Felix MONTECUCCOLI (AU); Mindaugas KUKLIERIUS (LT).



years. One thing is certain for SAF: it is indispensable for the farming and agri-food sector – both in France and in Europe – to be recognized and considered as strategic in the same way as aeronautics or energy. SAF's report proposes a way to renew farming and agri-food competitiveness and to cross-fertilize economic production and the environment in a move towards sustainable growth (underscoring the fact that research and more training are unavoidable elements of competitiveness).

Over hill and dale

After the work in the meeting room the ELO delegates visited Les Jardins de Gally, an innovative fruit picking farm on the outskirts of Paris

(to the west in the department of Yvelines). Created by the LAUREAU and VAULUCEAU families, over the years this structure has diversified to offer a large range of services including accommodation and meeting rooms, design of fruit baskets for businesses, decorations for events or even business landscaping. Young or less young, newcomer or agricultural professional, over a day or weekend everyone can enjoy what the countryside has to offer. The programme included a visit to the farm picking different fruit and vegetables on over 50 hectares of kitchen gardens and orchards, family walks through mazes and even learning how to make bread, apple juice and honey, before a break for a tasty snack. It also featured the

French organisation for the management of the urban fringe with a speech by a representative from the regional and interdepartmental directorate of agriculture and forests for Ile-de-France. A journey into an unknown world for all the participants!

■ Valery ELISSEFF
SAF Director



If the competitiveness of farms is important to you, come and meet the SAF-agriculteurs de France team at Innov-Agri at Outarville (Loiret) on 2, 3 and 4 September.

The report "Competitiveness of farms: our proposals" can be downloaded from the SAF website:
www.agriculteursdefrance.com



EUROPEAN HISTORIC HOUSES (UEHHA)

Art theft

A growing international phenomenon

The Lisbon treaty has led to Europe strengthening its union more than ever as ‘an area of freedom, security and justice’. However as far as the illegal trafficking in cultural goods is concerned, it is no more spared than any other continent. The theft of works of art increasingly resembles organized crime and is a complex phenomenon, with both prevention and law enforcement equally difficult challenges.



Although art theft is an illegal practice going far back into the mists of time, the boom in the art market in the 1960s sped up the process considerably. This, followed by increasingly efficient means of transport and communication, the opening up of borders and the instability of certain states, has meant trafficking cultural

goods has now reached the level of international organized crime.

Art crime has gone well and truly professional. Generally different teams deal with the location, theft and transfer of the booty abroad where it will more easily be sold. In order to facilitate placing an object

back on the official market while disguising its origin, it may be stored during the resale ban. It may also pass through the hands of a series of owners through false invoicing before it reaches a bona fide merchant. The proliferation of small provincial antique fairs where there are fewer inspections only worsens the problem.

It is very difficult to get a precise idea of the extent of theft of works of art or to quantify the extent of the loss. However, France and Italy are the countries in Europe most affected by this pillaging of their heritage, and both private individuals and churches are among the main victims. Paintings, sculptures and religious objects are most targeted but no country or place, indeed no category of antique can truly said to be spared. As for the destination of the stolen goods, it often depends on the type of object.

But Europe can also said to be partly responsible. Cultural goods are usually removed from their place of origin and end up on the international art market and although a victim of theft, Europe is also a transit area for the objects, indeed it influences the increase in demand for them. The impact of the diversity of national laws in this area is a more complex issue however. States are often are ill-equipped to deal with the current situation in which stolen objects, thieves and dealers are sheltered from the law.

EUROPEAN HISTORIC HOUSES (UEHHA)

Legislative diversity

A series of international legal instruments were created in the 1950s. The 1954 “European Cultural Convention” of the Council of Europe - not really binding but calling for measures to be taken to safeguard our heritage - was followed in 1985 by the “European Convention on crimes involving cultural goods”. With the opening up of the borders and the free movement of goods in 1993 a regulation and a directive were also adopted.

The UN ratified the UNESCO Convention of 1970, under which states agreed to take all necessary measures to ban the illegal import, export and transfer of stolen cultural goods and to prevent their acquisition by museums or other public institutions. This involves for example the issuing of export certificates and registers to be kept by antique dealers. In 1995 the UNIDROIT Convention was annexed to this Convention, intended to facilitate the return of stolen goods inter alia through judicial and administrative assistance, but also by obliging the purchaser to check the legal origin of the item before its resale.

Conventions require legislative intervention by the member states to render them applicable and they are open to different interpretations.

National laws also vary greatly with regard to sanctions, bans and reference periods for recording theft, and certain countries such as France, Italy and Greece have stricter laws than Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands for example.

Certain countries therefore require antique dealers and merchants to keep a police register indicating the article’s origin. Authorizing the export of cultural goods also varies. Export is banned in Spain for articles of national importance, and is often refused in Italy. However France has temporary authorizations for restorations, exhibitions or an expert opinion and in Germany export only requires the agreement of the federal minister of the interior. Certain states have a purchase option on objects proposed for export.

The severity of the sentence for dealing in stolen goods varies depending on the country from a fine to imprisonment, and likewise the resale ban varies considerably with serious consequences. In Belgium and the Netherlands dealing in stolen goods is easier since the ban is only five years long. The stolen object may reappear legally on the market after this date without any problem for the dealers and there can be no request for the return of the article to its owner since the period of limitation is over. Since 2005 Switzerland

has extended this period to thirty years whereas in France and the United Kingdom dealing in stolen goods is a continuing offence, which begins the day when the crime was completed.

Because of its diversity there are faults in the legislation as it is applied today in Europe. Thieves and illegal dealers turn these to their advantage by moving stolen goods through the continent. Only the harmonization of law can efficiently combat this form of crime. But is our cultural heritage, so much part of an identity which is both national and European, sufficiently valued today to enjoy true priority status alongside all the other issues of concern to society as a whole?

In the next issue we will examine what other preventive and enforcement measures exist to crack down on this scourge.

■ Donatienne de SÉJOURNET



THE INSTITUTIONAL ECHO

UNO-CBD-Conference in Bonn

The ninth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Bonn 19-30 May 2008, fails to achieve substantial results in the fight against species loss.



Some 7,000 people from 191 countries - scientists and representatives of environmental organizations - took 2 weeks to draft a document containing various decisions, such as a "specific negotiating mandate" to draft a contract by 2010 on conditions for the access of scientists and companies to genetic resources in developing countries. This is part of the battle against "bio-piracy" which has been affecting developing countries for some time.

Furthermore, criteria for protected marine areas have been agreed. A "de facto moratorium" has been adopted on the planting of genetically modified trees, calling for a risk analysis to be carried out before authorisations are granted - a long-term affair given the slow growth of the trees.

Even if some NGOs are not happy with the outcome of the agreed measures given the huge number of steps still ahead, a clear common approach on the protection of biodiversity has nonetheless emerged. The declaration of protected areas in Brazil, Indonesia and Congo is considered a big step forward result-

ing from negotiations in the margins of the conference. These projects will be financed by the industrialized countries. German Chancellor Angela MERKEL has promised major funding. The agenda of the next summit of the G8 countries will also feature biodiversity, the UN General Assembly will hold a special meeting on the subject and there is a plan to create a standing group of scientists comparable to the World Climate Council. The first part of the comprehensive study on the value of the natural environment and the costs of biodiversity loss has been presented in Bonn and the study will continue. All this should contribute to raising the profile of the biodiversity issue.

"Biodiversity Exhibition"

Economic associations, education facilities, NGOs and political organizations exhibited their latest work.

The German Aktionsbündnis Forum Natura (AFN) ran a stand on the "Plaza of Diversity" under the title Use Creates Diversity. AFN is a federation of mainly landowners' associations supporting the

interests of about 6 million people. These associations fully support sustainability as well as nature conservation. They are calling for political parties to protect property in order to ensure sustainable management of land. The AFN has invited politicians to cooperate with its associations to the benefit of both the natural environment and biodiversity. Members of the AFN so far include the German Landowners Association, the Federation of the Associations of the German Forest Owners, the German Farmers' Union, the German Hunters Union and the German Hunting Association, the German Fishing Association, the German Riders Union, the German Association of Wine Producers, the German Gardening Association as well as seven other supporting associations.

The stand featured the multi-flowers project of the Farmers' Union, the wildlife counting project of the German Hunters Union as well as a great variety of plants exhibited by the German Gardening Association. According to AFN chairman Karl Magnus GraF LEUTRUM these projects demonstrate that "use and protection of natural habitats go hand in hand".

■ Gesa WINTER

The Environment and Soil Management Award

The European Landowners Organization (ELO) under the patronage of Commissioner for the Environment Stavros DIMAS, under the auspices of the European Commission (DG ENVIRONMENT and the Joint Research Centre) and in association with the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences of Vienna (BOKU), Syngenta International AG, as well as the Centre for Soil and Environmental Sciences of the Ljubljana University, is proud to launch for the third time the call for proposal for the «Environment and Soil Management Award».

In 2007, the prize has been awarded to Mr Eugénio SEQUEIRA, President of the “Liga para a Protecção da Natureza” for its outstanding contribution to soil recovery in a rural threatened ecosystem in Portugal, on the occasion of the Gala-Dinner that followed the Conference on the Future of Agriculture that took place on 27 March 2008 in Brussels.

The aim of this award is to foster new concepts of protection and their realisation and to enhance awareness with regard to the importance of soil and environmental activities.

This prize rewards concrete achievements of practitioners working in the field of land use and land management, pursuing soil protection against threats as defined by EU criteria in a preventive approach.

These threats are

- Erosion
- Decline in organic matter
- Soil contamination
- Soil sealing
- Soil compaction
- Decline in soil biodiversity
- Salinisation
- Floods and landslides

Selection Criteria

With an amount of 2500€ and a diploma of recognition, the Environment and Soil Management Award recognizes outstanding tools and management practices contributing to the protection of soil and land, and improving environmental quality. The project:

- must be a contribution to the increase in land sustainability, land

protection and the improvement of soil quality and particularly to the mitigation of the threats above.

- must be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.
- must be innovative, original and transferable as a model.

The members of the jury are experts in the field of soil and related sciences.

1. Mr. Winfried E.H. BLUM, European Confederation of Soil Science Societies (ECSSS); University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria. [Chairman]
2. Mr. Thierry de L'ESCAILLE, ELO, member of the Committee ex officio, Brussels, Belgium
3. Mr. Michael HAMELL, European Commission, DG ENV, Brussels, Belgium
4. Mrs. Marie-Cécile LEBAS, Syngenta International AG, Brussels Office, Belgium.
5. Mr. Franc LOBNIK; University of Ljubljana: Biotechnical Faculty, Center for Soil and Environmental Sciences, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
6. Mr. Luca MONTANARELLA; European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Institute for Environment and Sustainability; Ispra, Italy.

Applications

Applications should be sent in English per post to:
European Landowners' Organization,
Rue de Trèves 67,
BE - 1040 Brussels,

AND per e-mail (under elec-

tronic format, preferably pdf) at environment@elo.org.

Applications may be submitted directly by a European physical or legal person or a public institution working in the field of land use or land management, or indirectly through organizations.

The application must contain the name of the project, the mail address (with zip code), the phone number and E-mail address, an executive summary (maximum 1 page) and the main document, describing the achievements presented for award (maximum 20 pages).

Applications for the 2008 prize should be sent in until the **15th of November 2008**. Any requests for further information may be submitted to the secretariat of ELO by post or e-mail at environment@elo.org

■ Cécile BONINO



FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

General Assembly of FCS in Scotland

This year *Friends of the Countryside* organized their general assembly in Scotland. Several visits were organized around the assembly and its conference on “Land Reform, Country Sports and Biodiversity in Scotland”. It provided the opportunity to discover a superb landscape and its major city – it is not for nothing that Edinburgh is often called the Athens of the North. These visits demonstrated the rich heritage of Scotland: both historical and modern – in a word, astonishing.

The visits focused on Scottish history. Edinburgh castle, the oldest parts of which date back to the Norman conquests, has been in turn a royal residence, a warehouse, a military fortress, a court of first instance and a prison. Today it houses the *Scottish Regalia* (including the *Stone of Destiny* and the *One O'clock Gun*). It dominates the town and its surroundings from a height of 90m, offering a splendid view. One of the groups visited *Rosslyn Chapel*. This small 15th century chapel was built by a catholic and its architecture and stone sculptures which show several influences have always inspired visitors and artists alike. It is mentioned in the famous book *The Da Vinci Code* and attracts those fascinated by mystery. Major renovations are currently under way. Finally the *Royal Yacht Britannia*, built in Scotland, served as accommodation for the Queen and the royal family for many years. This boat contributed to mak-

ing her the most widely traveled monarch in the world!

The programme also included a visit to Edinburgh's important galleries. The *Scottish Gallery* included works of art and paintings by contemporary artists. There are many works by Scottish colourists (Edinburgh school), jewellery, ceramics and glassware. The *Bourne Gallery* exhibits Scottish paintings and sculptures from the 17th century until today.

Scotland possesses rich land and estates passed down for generations. The principle of primogeniture, still applicable, means properties are immense, unimaginable in other European countries. The property of the Duke of BUCCLEUCH is particularly impressive. *Bowhill* which is part of it, lies along the *Scottish Borders* and includes the outskirts of Edinburgh. Many activities are carried out on this immense territory

which employs no fewer than 250 people. At *Bucleuch* farming is one of the group's basic activities and apart from crops also involves beef and sheep farming and a dairy. A team manages the property, including the tenant farms, houses and commercial sites such as shops and telecommunication aerials. Certain families have lived there for generations! The woodland at *Bucleuch* is highly diversified in terms of tree age and species and this has been achieved due to good management in meeting the objectives of biodiversity, wood production, wildlife management and landscaping.

Bucleuch Sporting offers its customers from all over the world opportunities to appreciate some of the best hunts in the Scottish countryside. It is an ideal site for open air activities, golf, fishing, bird-watching, horse-riding, climbing and water sports. This estate meets the demanding standards for country-



FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE



J.NORDENFALK, L. MIKO, T.LECLERC, A.WALL

stone is placed under the throne during coronations even today. The property also has several tourist activities and hosts various events all year, though traditionally it focuses on farming, angling on the Tay, forestry and moorland grouse and pheasant shoots. Gardens complete the grounds, and the owners have created an orchid house which currently has the largest collection of orchids in the country.

The *Friends of the Countryside* were welcomed each time by the owners themselves allowing highly interesting experiences to be exchanged.

■ Elise RENAULT



side occupations and contributes to the conservation of a rich history.

Other areas deserve a mention. *Roxburghe*, which has no fewer than 35,000 visitors a year, has one of the most beautiful golf courses in Scotland. There is a variety of activities – agriculture, residential homes, fishing, forestry, biomass combustion sites and cereal crops. *Rossie Priory* is a pretty country house in the heart of Scotland belonging to the KINNAIRD family which at its centre possesses the oldest cricket pitch in Scotland, still in use today for special events several times a year, though it is closed to the public. *Atholl Estate* castle and grounds

are open to the public for day trips, business events and receptions. Rooted in history, the main objective of this estate remains conservation, the respect and improvement of the natural environment, building and the local environment. The cattle and sheep meadows are surrounded by woodland which provides quality wood. Many private houses can be rented and are so popular a waiting list has been created.

Mansfield Estate is of great historical value since the *Stone of Destiny* on which the Scottish kings were crowned, immortalized in SHAKESPEARE's *MacBeth*, was housed there for centuries. This

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YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

A rural business in Africa

Kenya is an African country renowned for the beauty of its unspoilt nature. With the great savannah plains, a mountain rivaling Kilimanjaro in size, a Swahili coast rich in an Arab and commercial past, the great desert in the north and the Grand Rift Valley, it is a land of variety bursting with opportunity. Its 42 tribes, the British colonizers and the Indian immigrants knew a thing or two.



More particularly it was on the high plateaus around the Rift that the big arable and livestock farms of the last century were established. In recent years population pressure, climate change and economic instability have made business more complex in Kenya. Nowadays several economic, social, political and environmental factors must be combined for a business to thrive. The challenge of sustainable development is especially felt in this country.

In rural areas farms no longer produce as much as before and competition for pastureland is increasingly stiff. Water supplies are dictated by

much more sudden, unpredictable changes in the water cycle. Wildlife is suffering from the fragmentation of its habitats and conflicts with humans. Hunting has been banned since 1978, and population regulation has been banned since 2003 so to make a profit in the countryside creativity is a must.

However one booming sector which is recovering from the crisis in January 2008 is tourism. This sector desperately needs responsible managers and they are increasingly to be found in the eco-tourism branch, i.e. sustainable, responsible tourism.

It is in this sector that our little

company was set up a few years ago in the middle of the Rift, based on three key factors: a dream, a network and perseverance. The dream was born partly in a village community living on a seasonally flooded lake in a remote area of the Rift, Lake Solai. This community wanted above all to preserve the lake's ecosystem, which is particularly rich in birdlife, being located on the migratory path of the Grand Rift, with changing ecological conditions attracting a wide diversity of birds. The conservation of the lake needed to be combined with the development of eco-tourism which would attract economic activity. As a student a friend and I had started to assess the agri- and eco-

YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

hydrological resources of the lake, and so I shared this dream.

The other idea of the founders of *Drift the Rift* was the dream of showing foreign tourists a vision of the real Kenya off the beaten track. Lake Solai in itself did not have enough to attract a significant number of visitors, but as part of a circuit Solai could be a major plus, both because of its natural and cultural features as well as the generosity and hospitality of its people. We therefore sought out two other destinations towards the south and the north, both in private ranches.

The owner of the first ranch located along a salt lake next to the Nakuru national park had been thinking of transforming his estate into a private animal reserve for many years. Like many other estates the ranch suffered from heavy poaching, illegal logging to produce coal, population pressure, competition with large game which cannot be controlled (zebra, antelope) and low yield from livestock. The transformation into a reserve is a challenge, drawing on a large amount of external funds and a plan for the development of profitable activities such as tourism, but this is a crucial step in the conservation of the Rift's natural environment. The creation of the reserve was a happy coincidence

for our project, and we reached an agreement to set up our base camp in this reserve.

Further afield in wilder territory close to the northern plains was another ranch whose owner agreed to be the end point of the circuit, offering visitors the possibility to participate in the ranch's activities, build hide-outs and meet the managers.

Thus an itinerary combining village communities, reserves, private ranches and national parks with a great deal of hiking and meeting people led to the creation of *Drift the Rift* – the concept of drifting slowly through this magical valley.

Once this was established, an exercise in perseverance followed. The equipment needed to be bought, a team set up, camps developed and local staff trained. The perseverance was a daily affair since a marketing network had to be created in order to seek out customers and try to create development opportunities in the places visited.

Drift the Rift was run for a year on a very small scale, with customers mainly from Belgium, France and the UK. Socially there were proposals for projects, links with investors, reforestation activities and even penpal schemes between schools.

During the setting up of this company in Kenya I dealt with the associated activities in order to diversify risk. More specifically I was the consultant in water management for the private and community reserves in the north of the country. This gave me greater experience in the field, useful contacts and a certain amount of financial security.

Unfortunately in January 2008 violence broke out in Kenya following the presidential elections, which seriously damaged the country's image and consequently its tourism sector. Many people were displaced but the tourist areas were not really affected, which allowed *Drift the Rift* to quietly continue its safaris. We hope that the numbers will increase with the passing months!

It is a wonderful experience to be able to combine the discovery of such a rich culture and landscape with a commercial project while at the same time contributing to local development. I will retain lasting memories of the friendships made, the limitless horizons and hope for a better tomorrow.

■ Tanguy DE BOCK (Belgium)
www.driftherift.com



BOOK OF THE MONTH

Kingdom of birds.

Gérard GROLLEAU, éd. Ouest-France

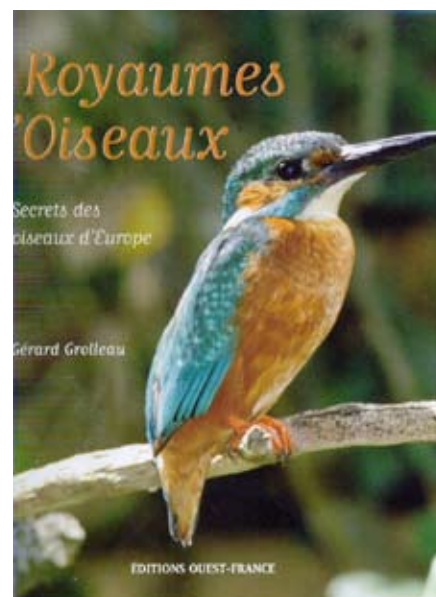
What a treat to spot the flight of a bearded vulture in the highest mountains, the yellow flash of a golden oriole in the woods, the courtship dance of a little bustard in the plains, the bustling activity of pink flamingos in their colony in the Camargue, the colours of the European bee-eater by a riverside! What a joy to hear the trills of a goldfinch in a garden! Here the dipper picks its way through a torrent at high altitude, there the wallcreeper flits around the cliff face like a butterfly. Each species has its own surprises!

However we must not forget that we are only fortunate enough to be able to see these species today because high-quality environments allow them to both nest and feed. The wild mountains - the refuge of many large birds of prey - and the forests that cover them are home to many different species of bird, adapted to these harsh conditions. Coastal areas are increasingly being

disturbed by tourism but certain remote or protected areas still attract many different birds.

The forests of the plains are often rich in biodiversity but this diversity is being seriously endangered by modern management methods and large numbers of visitors. Marshland is also rich in birdlife but fish farms are increasingly unhappy about their presence, particularly if the birds are fish-eaters. Single crops intensively farmed in the plains have led to the worst decline in biodiversity. Although in some circumstances certain birds can adjust to different biotopes, others are intimately linked to a single type of ecosystem, and are therefore all the more vulnerable.

The book's intention is to provide a colourful range of possible sightings and to encourage people to go and surprise – on condition it is done discretely! – the birds in the wild! Hopefully we will all become



bird-lovers and be more aware of the urgent need to protect them and their habitats, which are their castles and kingdoms.

■ Gérard GROLLEAU

Agenda 2008

27–29 August, Erba, Italy
5th session of the summer university: “More city and less countryside – the future of our rural landscape”, under the patronage of the President of the Italian republic. elo@elo.org

1-3 September, Hoenderloo (Netherlands)
Plenary of the Pilot Wildlife Estates initiative at the Hoge Veluwe (Netherlands). The participants will be informed of recent developments and the next stages of the PWE initiative.

This meeting will also certify other “wildlife” territories.
elo@elo.org

8-12 September, Gent (Belgium)
6th European Conference on ecological restoration: towards a sustainable future of European ecosystems
<http://www.ser2008.be/>

10 September, European Parliament, Brussels
Working session to promote cork oak products, co-organised by ELO and C.E.Liège (European Cork

Confederation)
elo@elo.org

12-14 September, Copenhagen
European Beer Festival
www.beerfestival.com

13-14 September, Hex (Belgium)
Annual festival of rare plants, roses and herb gardens
www.hex.be

11-14 June 2009, Prague
General Assembly of Friends of the Countryside



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