

NAPPA#169

NEWS FROM AFRICAN PROTECTED AREAS DECEMBER 2022



Niger River, by Omar Mahamadou Alpha Issifou

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Editorial



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THE WORLD COP OF EMPTY TALK?

Thousands of us headed out to COP27 last month: diplomats, officials, environmental activists, indigenous groups, journalists, lobbyists... In total, over 33,000 people and more than 600 hundred lobbyists made it to the COP venue, made up of several exhibition areas, dozens of pavilions and hundreds of booths – each of which handed out countless leaflets, flyers, and goodies, ran dozens of side events, panels, debates and talks.

That bubbling activity lasted for two weeks, which we spent battling the freezing cold and the harsh neon lights of conference halls - an artificial environment that had nothing to do with the natural ecosystems we were striving to protect. Thousands of people, and a corresponding number of meals, hotel rooms and flights: every five minutes, a new plane loaded with COP participants shredded the sky above Sharm-el-Sheikh, drowning out conversations with deafening noise.

This burst of activity, this flurry of people, these tons of CO₂ poured into the Egyptian sky over the course of a couple weeks... what did they achieve?

It's a question that should be asked.

Did COP27 meet its objective - putting a lid on carbon emissions and keeping us on track towards "well below 2 degrees" of global warming? Not really. Many delegations and activists left Sharm disappointed by the outcome of negotiations. Certainly, COP27 achieved a key symbolic victory when developed countries agreed to put funding on the table to compensate developing nations for the losses and damages they suffer due to climate change. But other emergencies- slashing carbon emissions, starting to phase out of fossil fuels, inflecting the trajectory of warming temperatures – weren't addressed.

Did COP27 bring together the right players – the right policymakers, the communities most affected by climate change, the independent observers, essential guarantors of a transparent and inclusive process? Again, it's hard to answer this with a frank "yes". More than 600 fossil fuel lobbyists attended COP27, more than ever before, meaning the talks were heavily infiltrated by the interests of the petroleum industry. In parallel, activists and marginalized communities struggled

to make their voices heard in Sharm amidst heightened surveillance concerns, inflated hotel prices and a repressive environment in which demonstrations were outlawed. Following Greta Thunberg's lead, many simply didn't show up.

As for journalists, I was among them this year, thanks to a scholarship. Without it, it would have been impossible to afford a stay in Sharm and cover COP on my own. Of course, big international newsrooms and press agencies remain well represented. But the top climate talks remain out of reach for most freelancers, independent journalists, and small newsrooms. Yet these reporters are our ears and eyes around the negotiation table, and they play an essential role in keeping us all informed on the environmental battles being won and lost within the COP enclosure.

So yes, climate COPs often are often likened to a huge white elephant, a big and senseless machine churning out empty talk and "bla bla bla", as Greta Thunberg would say.

I understand these doubts and share them. But beyond the more than legitimate criticism of the COP process and its inefficiencies, I left Sharm feeling hopeful about a few things. The first is that aside from its positive or negative political outcome, COPs are an essential space where climate actors from around the world meet, a powerful accelerator of good ideas, an irreplaceable networking platform. The second is that despite all their flaws, successive COPs have mobilized ever-growing media attention, giving environmental journalists the opportunity to speak to a wide audience about vital issues that are, most of the time, overshadowed in mainstream media by other concerns. Last but not least, without being too optimistic, I left this COP feeling that a growing number of states – especially small islands – are coming to the summit ready to "rock the boat," to cut the "blablabla" and to call out others on their climate inaction. In the end, even the growing influence of fossil fuel lobbyists at these events is probably a good sign: they are starting to take these talks seriously!

Lyse Mauvais is a freelance environmental journalist based in Iraq, where she writes about the Middle East. She just spent two weeks in Sharm-el-Sheikh to cover COP27. ●

PAPACO ONLINE

[facebook/IUCNpapaco](https://www.facebook.com/IUCNpapaco)

[MOOC FB Group \(English\)](https://www.facebook.com/groups/moocfbgroup/)

[@moocconservation \(Instagram\)](https://www.instagram.com/moocconservation/)

[@Papaco_IUCN \(Twitter\)](https://twitter.com/Papaco_IUCN)

[Papaco.org](https://www.papaco.org)

[IUCN Protected and Conserved Areas newsletter](#)



MOOC-CONSERVATION.ORG

SELF-PACED MOOCS

Registrations closed. If you have started one or more MOOCs, you have until December 11 at midnight (UTC) to finish the exams. After this date we take our semestral break. MOOCs will be open again in January, exams will be changed and grades reset.

Important: remember to download your attestation of success. Once we reset the grades, the current attestation will no longer be available.

End of session: December 11, 2022

Access the course: mooc-conservation.org



ESSENTIALS

What are they? They are short courses geared to a specific profile of protected area conservation actors.

Four options are possible: Rangers, Managers (involved in Research R or in Law enforcement L) and Leaders.

The Essentials are open throughout the year.



RANGER ESSENTIAL

For protected area (PA) professionals who apply decisions and ensure the implementation of activities inside the PA.



MANAGER ESSENTIAL

For protected area professionals who need to plan, manage and assed the work carried out by field agents.

➔ **MANAGER LAW** focuses on law enforcement and the valorisation of the PA and its natural resources.

➔ **MANAGER RESEARCH** focuses on research activities, monitoring-evaluation and ecological monitoring.



LEADER ESSENTIAL

For actors who are influencing the protected area context at a larger scale, without necessarily working directly inside a protected area.



AMBASSADORS - SIX NEW MEMBERS

AMBASSADORS? They are MOOC Conservation students who volunteered to assist other learners in their cities or regions. Full list: [here](#).

NEW AMBASSADORS

Kechemy in Haiti



Kechemy is an agro-phytotechnician. He is passionate about nature, and MOOCs inspired him to create an ICONE (Initiative for the Conservation of Nature and the Environment), an organisation that promotes nature and the environment. His ICONE fights for the preservation of the wild ducks in the pond of Jean-Rabel.

Festus in Tanzania



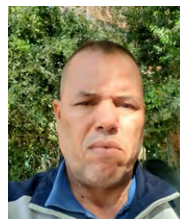
Festus is the founder of the NGO Blue Victoria. He was born and raised on Lake Victoria, in a fishing community that used fishing as a means of subsistence. Declining fish resources in the lake are a threat to the society in which he grew up. In 2018, the IUCN published a report on the state of Lake Victoria's biodiversity. This report shows that fish are threatened with extinction. Through his organisation, he wants to involve the local community to conserve endangered species.

Younfa in Niamey



Younfa is a doctoral student in ecology and sustainable management of biodiversity at the University of Niamey.

Brahim in Morocco



Brahim is passionate about nature conservation and MOOCs have been helpful in his work. After having taken part in IFDD training courses and Papaco MOOCs, he acquired the knowledge enabling him to participate with satisfaction in several training and awareness seminars in parks, within associations and schools, as well as on the radio.

Sékouba in Guinea



Sékouba registered for Papaco MOOCs in 2020. He is the manager of an environmental NGO in Guinea and manager of an agricultural and sanitation company.

Djakaria in Gaoua, Burkina Faso

Djakaria is a Water and Forest Inspector in charge of 3 classified forests (FC Bougouriba, FC Koulbi, FC Nabéré) and also three wildlife reserves (Total Bontioli Wildlife Reserve, Partial Wildlife Reserve of Bontioli and the partial reserve of Nabéré) in the South-West region (Burkina Faso). He followed and successfully completed several MOOCs and participated in the 18th promotion of DU (DU 18). ●

If you'd like to create a MOOC Conservation Hub in your city, first make sure that there is not already one ([full list here](#)). If you don't see your city or country, get in touch with us.

YOUTH-CONSERVATION.ORG: TUTORS



We officially launched the youth-conservation.org website in October. Our aim through this project is to raise awareness among the youth (10 to 17 years old) about the importance of preserving the environment, and that we all have a role to play to help save the planet. We would like to see the youth and African youth in particular take ownership of this tool and mostly that concrete actions flow from it.

The website is only available in French, a translation to English is in the works.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

In the «Prof» tab of youth-conservation.org, resources are available to teachers, supervisors and parents wishing to take the modules a step further with their students or children.

Poster

Each module is accompanied by an infographic poster in PDF format which illustrates and summarises the content of each module, keeping with the «Discover, understand and act» organisation. This poster can be printed out in the desired format and used in class.

Guides

A first version of all the guides is online. They are also in PDF format and optimised for black and white printing. Their objective is to allow the user to take a step further in the learning process. They are specifically intended for use by teachers, to help them lead class workshops on

the various topics covered. Thus, supervisors can raise questions, put the content of the module into perspective in the context of each country, and suggest ways to act locally.

REMINDER: TUTORS

Péthuelle and Firmin are two Youth Conservation tutors whose role is to promote the site respectively in the Republic of Congo and Burkina Faso. Click on their photo to send them an email. ●



OTHER FREE ONLINE COURSES

FREE ONLINE TRAINING AND RESOURCES

The training courses on mooc-conservation.org are all absolutely free, from registration to attestation. Certification does not cost you anything either (diploma awarded by Senghor University after fulfilling certain conditions and passing an additional exam – in French only for now). This is the heart of Papaco: to provide free and quality training resources to protected area professionals in Africa, the ultimate objective being the significant improvement of the management of protected areas on the continent.

Two sessions punctuate the MOOCs: one, generally from January to June, the other, from September to December. During the sessions, the resources are accessible, the student can follow the outline of the chosen MOOC(s), choose the modules that interest them, study, take exams, all at their own pace. There are no course schedules, no meetings to attend, just log into your mooc-conservation.org account and click Start. Throughout each session, the MOOC Conservation team is available to answer questions, organise webinars (optional) and do more intensive communication to attract learners who can benefit from the training.

During the two breaks (July/August and December), the courses are no longer accessible. We take the opportunity to update materials, make changes that may interrupt the accessibility of the platform, change exams and simply focus our efforts on other projects for the development of the capacities of protected area professionals.

While waiting for the new session, there is a whole range of free online trainings available to you. Some are part of our offering, others are developed by our colleagues in the IUCN or by external partners.

NB: in this NAPA we list the training courses available in English. You can consult the French-speaking ones in the French NAPA.

OTHER FREE TRAINING ON [MOOC-CONSERVATION.ORG](https://mooc-conservation.org)

The Essentials – short courses for protected area professionals

For these short trainings, we have compiled videos of the MOOCs to build a tailor-made training for four profiles of protected area professionals:

- Ranger: field agents in need of technical skills.
- Manager: the agents working in the protected areas, they are the ones giving orders to rangers. Two options::
 - Law: this officer focuses on law enforcement in protected areas;
 - Research: ecological monitoring, scientific research, these are his field of work.
- Leader: he/she does not work directly in the protected area, rather in state institutions. He/she needs general knowledge related to the context of protected areas.

Do these trainings if:

You have already completed the MOOCs and want to refresh your memory.

You wish to do a short course focusing on the essential knowledge to be acquired.

The certificate for you is secondary.

We reset the grades on December 15, 2022. You can therefore take the quizzes again and have another attempt to obtain a certificate of completion if you are interested. The Essentials are accessible all year round.

Coming up in 2023

We will develop new MOOCs, but also «learning tools», in other words, very short and very specialised courses. We'll talk more about it in 2023, but if you have topics to recommend, you can start submitting them by email or on our networks.

FREE TRAINING FROM PARTNERS WITHIN IUCN

IUCN Academy



In 2021, IUCN launched its Academy. Make no mistake, some courses in this catalog are free. Here is one that is open throughout the month of December.

Nature's crown jewels: An introduction to natural World Heritage

MOOC Description:

Are you interested in discovering a leading global instrument for nature conservation? Learn about key World Heritage concepts. Get trained on the benefits of natural World Heritage sites and how they contribute to societies and economies. On completion of the course, you will understand the concept of World Heritage and how it came about, the different types of World Heritage sites: cultural, natural and mixed, the links between nature and culture in the context of Heritage.

Do this training if:

You want to become an informed and active supporter of World Heritage.

You want to learn about key World Heritage concepts in an easy-to-access, interactive way.

Environmental Law Centre Learning Platform

After having been blocked by the lockdown in 2020, the IUCN Law Center launched an online training platform to sustain their projects in the field. All resources are completely free.



Financing Conservation Entrepreneurship

MOOC Description:

This course aims to provide participants with a comprehensive overview of the process for starting a business and developing the related business plan. It will also present how the usual business development approach can be adapted to nature conservation reality and requirements, the different financing instruments available to

conservation businesses and how to access this financing.

Do this training if:

You are a conservation practitioner wanting to understand the administrative side of conservation organisations.



Wildlife Crime: Legal and Institutional Aspects

MOOC Description:

In this course, participants will gain an in-depth understanding of poaching and illegal wildlife trade, its widespread consequences on biodiversity and legal implications, from the perspectives of supply and demand. The course will cover the role of international agreements in addressing illegal wildlife trade and provide case law analysis from three illegal wildlife trade 'hotspots', Cameroon, the Republic of Congo and China.

Do this training if:

You are particularly interested in law enforcement and wildlife crime.

Conservationtraining.org, IUCN MOOCs

ConservationTraining.org was launched in 2009 to provide conservation-based training to the global conservation community. They offer over 400 hours of free online courses, many in multiple languages. Courses are built in partnership with scientists from conservation organisations such as the IUCN, UNDP, UNEP, CBD and more.

IUCN Red List

MOOC Description:

The full Red List training is on this site, with Caroline Pollock as the main lecturer (she also teaches the Red List module on our MOOC on Species Conservation). Nine modules are available including the final exam. Learn all about the Red List of Endangered species, the assessment process, categories and criteria etc.

Do this training if:

You would like to receive extensive training on the Red List of Endangered Species.

IUCN Green Status of Species

MOOC Description:

The IUCN Green Status of Species is an optimistic new part of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ that provides a complementary tool for assessing species recovery and the impact of conservation. The system reports not only a species' current recovery status, but also how conservation actions have affected this current status, what we might expect if conservation actions were halted, and how a species' status might improve in the future with conservation action.

Do this training if:

You have completed the full training on the Red List.

The two courses above are developed by IUCN bodies. IUCN-Med also have a couple of courses on the website, as does IUCN-CPSG. But conservationtraining.org also hosts training from other organisations.

we will list in the next section.

Other IUCN learning resources

Some other resources within IUCN are not MOOCs per se, but they do promote self-training.

Podcast: Investing for ocean impact

Description:

When it comes to tackling climate change and the biodiversity crisis, the ocean and the world's coastlines offer many solutions. Yet these solutions don't receive anywhere near enough money to realize them. And while governments and philanthropists should provide more funding, they can't meet the challenge alone. Investments from the private sector are equally key to success. Entrepreneurs across the world need support to integrate restoration and conservation into sustainable businesses. Only then can we create profit, both for people and for planet. Join Dorothée Herr – manager of the IUCN's Blue Natural Capital Financing Facility – to discover the reasons to invest in the ocean.

National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hotspotting and Shaping Action

Description:

A common methodological framework to enable countries to prioritize interventions to abate plastic pollution. This tutorial document has been created to assist new users to get started with the application of the National Guidance. It aims to guide users step-by-step through the hotspotting assessment by following a linear workflow.

FREE ONLINE COURSES OUTSIDE IUCN

Conservationtraining.org, non-IUCN MOOCs

As mentioned earlier, many outside organisations have MOOCs hosted on conservationtraining.org. The ones listed below are particularly interesting to dive deeper into the topics studied during our MOOCs.

Management Effectiveness for Marine Protected Areas

MOOC Description:

This course is designed to provide coral reef managers and conservation practitioners with guidance on key considerations that should be made throughout the management cycle of a MPA, MPA Network, or other effective conservation measures (OECMs) to increase the efficacy and progress towards conservation goals for protected areas. Lessons provide background information and critical resources on management effectiveness as well as guiding questions to assist managers in applying lesson concepts to their local contexts.

Do this training if:

You've done the MOOC on Marine Protected Areas on mooc-conservation.org and wish to learn even more.

Identifying and delineating Key Biodiversity Areas

MOOC Description:

This course is designed to provide you with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and delineate KBAs consistent with the KBA Standard.

Do this training if:

You want in depth training on KBAs which we cover briefly in the MOOC on Species conservation.

There you have it, a couple of relevant free online courses to follow while we all wait for next session MOOC Conservation starting 23 January 2023. ●

IF YOU'D LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO A NAPA (ARTICLE OR PUBLICATION ON AFRICAN PROTECTED AREAS, COVER PHOTO, JOB OFFER ETC.), CONTACT US.

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