



TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

TBA Field Course Kibale Forest, Uganda

10th July – 9th August 2024



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INSPIRING CAREERS IN CONSERVATION



TBA's month-long courses place young people at the heart of biodiversity conservation. We provide relevant, expert-led, practical teaching in the very habitats that need protection, equipping students to make a difference on the ground immediately.

Our courses target young people at a critical juncture: after they've completed their undergraduate studies but before they've chosen a professional or postgraduate path. This is a moment of asking questions, seeking connections, and exploring options. We provide the practical training, field experience, and guidance needed to embark on a career in conservation.

Our courses deliver results. TBA alumni are bringing species back from the brink of extinction, protecting rainforests and wetlands, and improving the lives and livelihoods of local communities.

A LIFE CHANGING COURSE

Our 2024 field course provided hands-on training to 24 young scientists from 18 countries. This diverse group made Kibale Forest National Park their home for a month of learning, inspiration, and networking. Based at the Makerere University Biological Field Station (MUBFS), the course fully immersed students in a forest ecosystem, enabling them to experience its vibrant biodiversity and see firsthand how it is managed.

The diversity of participants—and teachers—created a unique opportunity for cross-cultural engagement and mutual learning.

“The combination of theoretical knowledge, practical fieldwork, and real-world conservation talks significantly enhanced my understanding of ecology and conservation, making it a valuable and impactful course for my conservation and academic career”

Nandera Lolila - Tanzania



OUTDOOR LEARNING

The field course took a hands-on, practical approach, providing our aspiring conservation scientists with skills that cannot be gained in the classroom.

Participants learned how to frame ecological questions and take a problem-solving approach. Through practical workshops and exercises, they explored topics such as forest restoration, pollination, and how animals and plants interact. Participants also developed expertise in a variety of field techniques, survey methods, and research protocols.

The skills and knowledge participants gained are fully transferable, enabling them to apply them in their work back home and build on this foundation as their conservation careers progress.

“The course broadened my perception of different taxonomic groups and how I could use them to answer ecological questions.”

Joy Kingsley, Nigeria

“The unique combination of hands-on learning in such an extraordinary environment, alongside participants from diverse countries, offered endless opportunities to grow and learn.”

Fabian Gnadlinger, Austria.



WORLD CLASS TEACHERS



“The instructors provided exceptionally detailed and insightful teaching, while the field work enhanced the practical learning experience and allowing for more effective research.”

Chadrack Azihou - Benin

“What I found particularly valuable was how the tutors encouraged us to explore new ideas. As an ornithologist, of course, I wanted to work with birds, but the tutors suggested that I try something different. I learned to step out of my comfort zone!”

Miaro Faliarivola, Madagascar

We invited leading experts to teach on the course. They covered topics such as pollination, nature based solutions to climate change, the role of microbes in ecology, and human-wildlife coexistence. All the teaching was interactive and involved practical activities such as measuring pollination effectiveness, assessing carbon stocks in forest plots, and constructing networks between insects and plants. An over-arching approach of each practical exercise was how to collect and analyse robust data to answer ecological questions.

A key feature of TBA courses is that half of the instructors come from the host country, bringing an exceptional mix of real-world expertise and diverse approaches. Most of our Ugandan instructors and one European instructor were TBA alumni now in high-level positions with enthusiasm to return to TBA and share their knowledge and inspire the next generations.

COLLABORATION AND RESEARCH

The course provided students with a valuable opportunity to design and conduct their own field research projects. Students learnt how to frame research question and devise appropriate field methods, analyze their data, and communicate their results. Students from different countries and cultures worked together on these projects, giving them a rich experience of collaboration, which will be useful for their future careers.

These projects also generated new insights into the ecology and resources of Kibale Forest and MUBFS, including a guide to the macrofungi diversity of Kibale and a study on primate recognition of human language and its role in human-wildlife conflicts.

Students told us that the projects built their confidence and expertise in how to do research that is already influencing their career development,

“The opportunity to interact with experts and peers from diverse backgrounds enriched the learning experience and broadened my understanding and professional network.”

Loy Natukunda, Uganda

“The course allowed me to connect with students from diverse conservation backgrounds, creating a network that I intend to maintain throughout my life and academic career. This sense of community and shared passion for conservation was truly inspiring.”

Samuel Ssemyalo, Uganda

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CREATING A LASTING IMPACT



The end of these young scientists' time on the TBA course marks the beginning of their careers as conservation scientists. They will join a global network of more than 2,600 conservation champions from 90 countries trained by TBA—a community who are turning our training into action and achieving real conservation impact: saving species, protecting habitats, conducting research, and working within decision-making bodies.

"I already feel the change the TBA has inspired in me, and I will strive to apply it in my conservation work."

Collins Luseka, Kenya

"I believe that with the tools and relationships TBA has helped me forge, I can play my own role in tropical biology and conservation. I will remember this experience, the people who taught me, and the people who grew alongside me my whole life."

Indira Kulkarni, USA

THE TEACHERS



PROF IRENE TIELEMAN
University of Groningen,
Netherlands

TBA Alumna and returning teacher, Irene's research interests centre around avian physiology, behaviour, and life-history evolution, particularly in tropical rain-driven environments.



PROF GRAHAM STONE
University of Edinburgh, UK

A returning teacher, Graham's research focuses on plant-insect interactions. This has included studies of ant-plant mutualisms in Kenyan acacias, and species rich tri-trophic foodwebs in China.



DR DAVID TUMUSIIME
Makerere University, Uganda

TBA Alumnus. Co-Director of the Makerere University Biological Field Station, David is strongly interested in the social development issues associated with natural resource management.



DR ROSIE TREVELYAN
Tropical Biology Association, UK

Rosie is a passionate advocate of capacity building as a vital tool for effective conservation. She has been at TBA from the beginning, creating the courses that TBA runs and making sure TBA's teaching has real and lasting impact.



DR PATRICK OMEJA
Makerere University, Uganda

Patrick is a conservation scientist with over 20 years of experience working in Kibale National Park, conducting research on forest restoration, elephant biology and leading a number of training efforts.



DR PERPETRA AKITE
Makerere University, Uganda

TBA Alumna. Perpetra has been the lead entomologist for several development projects in Uganda. She has worked with NGOs, private and public sectors to enhance knowledge in management of natural habitats.



PROF ERIC SANDE
Makerere University, Uganda

Co-Director of the Makerere University Biological Field Station. Eric is an experienced ornithologist and a passionate ambassador for bird conservation in Uganda



DR EMILY OTALI
Kibale Chimpanzee Project, Uganda

TBA Alumna. Emily has been the Field Director of the Kibale Chimpanzee Project since 2005, directing the daily activities of long-term data collection on chimpanzee behavior.



DR FRAZER SINCLAIR
Tropical Biology Association, UK

A recent addition to the TBA team, Frazer is an experienced tropical ecologist and conservationist with a particular interest in teaching applied statistics.

THE STUDENTS

The diversity of students attending our courses is perhaps our greatest asset, and this year was no exception. The 24 students represented 18 countries across three continents:

Africa: Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe (2), Tanzania, Uganda (2)

Europe: Austria, Germany (2), Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom (4),

North America: United States of America



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THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

This field course was generously supported by:



We are also immensely grateful for the ongoing support of our [academic member institutions](#).

If you would like to join us in transforming more careers in conservation, then please visit the [donations](#) and [membership](#) pages on our website.



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Investing in people for conservation

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