



Namibian Environment & Wildlife Society

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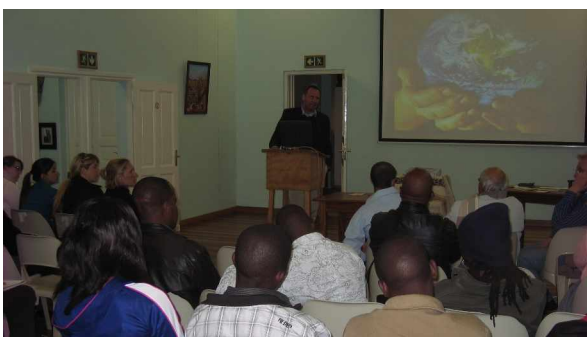
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Climate Change and Human Vulnerability: Law and Policy - Dr Oliver Ruppel

The latest NEWS public talk on 23 June was conducted by Dr Ruppel from the Faculty of Law at UNAM, who is a legal advisor (and chair) to the WTO on trade and the environment.

Dr Ruppel stressed that Africa was one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change, exacerbated by multiple stresses such as poverty, complex governance, limited access to capital/markets/infrastructure & technology, ecosystem degradation and complex disasters & conflicts as well as low adaptive capacity. Evidence suggests that Africa will be worst affected by changes in rainfall patterns, greater weather extremes and increased incidences of drought & flood with vulnerable groups including women, children and indigenous peoples.



Dr Ruppel addressing NEWS members and guests at the Scientific Society (© Manuela Schmid)

The following environmental newsletters of interest have recently been distributed and can be viewed at the following websites:

- RAPTORS NAMIBIA NEWSLETTER
NO 2 - APRIL TO JUNE 2010
WWW.NNF.ORG.NA/RAPTORS
- CCF FUNDRAISING GALA -
"RACING TO THE FUTURE"
WWW.CHEETAH.ORG

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

TALK CONTINUED	2
SAVE ENERGY	2
PUBLIC PRESENTATION	2
WHERE HAVE ALL THE SNAKES GONE	2/3
ROLL OF HONOUR	3

Talk continued

The Namibian Constitution has the following legal responsibilities which could be related to climate change:

- Article 91 (c): Environmental Functions of the Ombudsman
- Article 100: Sovereign Ownership of Natural Resources "Land, water and natural resources below and above the surface of the land and in the continental shelf and within the territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone of Namibia shall belong to the State if they are not otherwise lawfully owned."
- Article 95: Promotion of the Welfare of the People: "... maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity of Namibia and the utilisation of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians..."

Although there are many other National Policies - e.g. Vision 2030 and NDP 3 & human rights as well as the environment; Namibia's Draft Climate Change Policy; Environmental Management Act No. 7 of 2007 and a variety of International Laws, there are certain obligations to these and need to be addressed adequately to be effective.

Dr Ruppel ended his interesting presentation indicating further research priorities that he supports as WTO Chair and that include:

- Climate Change and World Trade Policy
- Carbon Trade and multilateral action to reduce greenhouse emissions
- Trade negotiations improving access to climate friendly technology
- International development cooperation
- Climate Change and International Human Rights Law (women, children, indigenous groups)



Dr Ruppel during Q & A (© Manuela Schmid)

Save Energy

Leaving your computer on overnight wastes as much energy as you would use making 800 A4 photocopies.

Leaving the lights on in a conference/meeting room overnight wastes sufficient electricity to make 1000 cups of tea.

TVs, DVDs and video machines left on "stand by" continue to use at least HALF the energy that is used when switched on.

Overfilling your kettle can waste enough electricity to run a TV for 26 hours

Recycling 1 ton of paper (400 reams) saves 15 trees, 2,5 barrels of oil, 4132 kWh electricity, 2,26m³ of landfill space, 31319 gallons of water and prevents 26.8 kg air pollutants from reaching the atmosphere.

Source: Environmental Resource Management - www.capetown.gov.za

Public Presentation

You are herewith cordially invited to attend the NEWS Public Talk on Wednesday, 21 July 2010 at 19h30

Alecia Carter

Institute of Zoology, Zoological Society of London, on:

"What do kangaroos, agamas and baboons have in common? Investigating individual variation in behaviour in wild systems"

VENUE: rooms of the Namibia Scientific Society, 110 Robert Mugabe Ave, opposite the National Theatre in Windhoek.

No entrance fee - Donations welcome.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Where have all the snakes gone

Snakes may be declining across the world according to a global study! The following was published on the BBC by Richard Black, Environmental Correspondent online on 9 June 2010:

"Researchers examined records for 17 snake populations covering eight species over the last few decades, and found most had declined markedly. For reasons that are not entirely clear, some populations shrank in number abruptly around 1998.

Writing in the journal *Biology Letters*, the researchers describe the findings as "alarming" but say much more work is needed to understand the causes.

"This is the first time that data has been analysed in this way, and what we've shown is that in different parts of the world we seem to have this steep decline in a short period," said project leader Chris Reading.

Snakes continued

"It surprised us when we realised what we were looking at," he told BBC News.

"And we don't have a clue what it was about that period of time (around 1998)."

Dr Reading's team at the UK's Centre for Ecology and Hydrology ran the study with institutions in Australia, France, Italy and Nigeria.

Data deficiencies:

The main problem for anyone wanting to conduct a global survey such as this is simply lack of data. Monitoring snake populations means marking the individuals in some way - typically by snipping a pattern into their scales, or implanting a microchip. Field seasons can last for many months, and have to be repeated annually.

The researchers believe they amassed most, if not all, long-term datasets for this study - although "long-term" in this context means going back more than one decade, in some cases more than two.

Nevertheless, within this relatively short timeframe, eight of the 17 populations were seen to fall markedly in size - some by more than 90% - with only one showing any sign of a rise.

The year when many of the snake declines began - 1998 - raises the question of whether climatic factors might be involved, as a very strong El Nino conditions contributed to making it the hottest year recorded in modern times.

Dr Reading's research group suggests many causes might be involved, and is appealing to other researchers to come forward with any more long-term datasets that might broaden the picture."

Do NEWS members have any data or thoughts regarding snakes declining throughout Namibia? Your feedback would be appreciated [Editor]

Roll of Honour

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our corporate members, which allows us to pursue our mission to conserve the natural environment of Namibia and to promote appropriate protection, wise and sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable development.

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