

Programme ‘Turning the illiberal into the convivial? Debating the future of wildlife conservation in Africa’

Workshop @ Chartfield, Cape Town, 7-10 June 2026

Dear all,

Below you can find a first draft of the programme for our Cape Town workshop. As per the concept note, the workshop has three central objectives:

1. To collectively reflect on the histories of African conservation in contemporary turbulent times and discuss how illiberal trajectories can be changed towards more holistic and just ways of wildlife conservation in the future;
2. To actively reconnect the past, present and future of this rethinking of African conservation;
3. To lay ground for a joint statement article, a potential special issue and ideas for possible a cooperative transdisciplinary third party funded project to engage with past, present and future conservation imaginaries, knowledges and practices in Africa.

Practically, the idea of the programme is to combine presentations with broader debate sessions. The broader debate sessions are meant to reflect on the presentations and to discuss broader themes identified as important for the workshop, namely:

1. Conservation brutalism: militarization, extraction, resistance (Matose & Marijnen)
2. Histories and genealogies of illiberal conservation (Thakoli, Lenggenhager & Pesa)
3. Conservation futures: Conviviality, African environmentalisms, Visions (Bollig & Büscher)

We kindly ask the theme leads to prepare some brief notes on the importance of each theme to open the discussion and help structure and lead the sessions.

Thanks so much and see you all soon!

Michael, Luregn and Bram

Sunday 7 June 2026

9:00-10:30	Welcome, round of introductions, setting the scene, Aims & Programme	Bram, Michael, Luregn
10:30-11:00	Coffee	
11:00-12:30	Capitalism and Tourism	
	The wilderness fetish: The mystification of nature conservation in the age of capital	Clemens Greiner (Cologne)
	Paths Not Taken: Reimagining Tourism and Conservation Beyond Colonialism	Mfundo Mlilo (Cologne) & Javier Revilla Diez (Cologne)
12:30-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:30	Violence and Conflict	

	Defending and promoting wildlife economy through conservation violence in the Okavango Delta, Botswana	Emmanuel Mogende (Botswana)
	A Political Forest: Conservation and Conflict in Liberia's Sapo National Park	Shadrach Kerwillain (Munich)
15:30-16:00	Coffee	
16:00-17:30	Broader debate 1 Conservation brutality: militarization, extraction, resistance	Frank Matose (Cape Town)
19:00	Dinner	

Monday 8 June 2026

9:00-10:30	Broader Debate 2 Histories and genealogies of illiberal conservation	Luregn Lenggenhager (Basel) & Lerato Thakoli (Wageningen) & Iva Peša (Groningen)
10:30-11:00	Coffee	
11:00-12:30	History and Indigeneity	
	"International Conservation NGOs and the Quest to Control the African Countryside, 1960–present".	Jan-Niklas Kniewel (Bern)
	Maasai indigeneity and land rights.	Saitoti Parmelo (Tanzania) & Jim Igoe (Virginia)
	Conservation Ethics: Practicing Olopololi in Kenya's Amboseli Ecosystem	Saitabau Lulunken (Cologne)
12:30-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:30	Elites and Accumulation	
	On the intersection between housing, biodiversity conservation and transnational flows of capital in the age of brutality.	Lerato Thakoli (Wageningen)
	Elite Private Nature Conservation – between dereliction and curation	Luregn Lenggenhager (Basel)
	Democratization or Elite Consolidation? Community-based Conservation and New Alliances in southwestern Zambia	Léa Lacan (Cologne)
15:30-16:00	Coffee	
16:00-17:30	Broader Debate 3a Conservation futures: Conviviality, African environmentalisms, Visions	Bollig & Büscher
19:00	Dinner	

Tuesday 9 June 2026

9:00-10:30	Future and Transformation	
	Carbon trading in wildlife landscapes: what does it imply for critical environmental justice?	Mathew Bukhi Mabele (Dodoma) & Wilhelm Kiwango (Dodoma)

	Community-based conservation in Southern and Eastern Africa (Namibia/Kenya): Land-Based Economies, Governance, and Politics in Rapidly Changing Rural Communities	Michael Bollig (Cologne)
	How effective are Payments to Encourage Coexistence (PEC) in mitigating Human Carnivore Conflict (HCC)? The case of the Rungwa-Ruaha Landscape in Tanzania.	Wilhelm Andrew Kiwango & Mathew Bukhi Mabele (Dodoma)
10:30-11:00	Coffee	
11:00-12:30	Future and Transformation	
	Conservation, Extraction: Nexus or continuities of illiberal logics	Tafadzwa Mushonga
	Tiptoeing Transformation? The need for structural change and the realities of power in South Africa	Bram Büscher, Gijsbert Hoogendoorn, Innocent Sinthumule
12:30-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:30	Broader Debate 3b Conservation futures: Conviviality, African environmentalisms, Visions	Bollig & Büscher
15:30-16:00	Coffee	
16:00-17:30	Concluding session: publications and possible grant ideas going forward Major overview publication / special issue	Luregn, Michael, Bram
19:00	Dinner	

Workshop is made possible through the support of:



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