

# Groundswell News Journal

A project of The Grassroots Coalition for Environmental & Economic Justice

*We Are A Global Family. News By and About Climate Activists.*

Our Motto: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

*A Celebration of Youth. www.gobackclub.org. Issue No. 58: January 2020*

## Iona's Column:

### Lots of News



Dear Reader,

I just sat spell-bound watching my all-time favorite movie for about the fifth time, "Winged Migration."

I cannot tell you how powerful an impression watching actual footage of birds migrating all over the world was. I watched the credits at the end. Hundreds and hundreds of people from all over the world collaborated on this beautiful film. Hundreds and hundreds of people apparently love birds as I do.

So, the major question is this: Why can't the world be like this movie production effort? Hundreds, thousands, millions of us collaborating together to help birds and all other forms of life – yes, including us.

Although I was primarily just trying to relax and enjoy a couple of hours on a self-proclaimed "day off," I have been touched beyond words watching these elegant creatures.

Long ago, when my grandchildren were very little, I sat on the floor with them watching the start of this sacred movie. I believe it is sacred. The birds are sacred and so are the humans who love birds enough to have worked on this humble masterpiece.

"It is enough to leave even 'Matrix' fans staring at the screen, gaping in awe!" wrote Jim Verniere of the *Boston Herald*, as seen on the back of the package. "Mesmerizing!" "Breathtaking! As lofty as it is exhilarating!" said other reviewers.

In my attempt to simply learn when the movie was produced, I Googled and found out you can watch the whole thing (in French anyhow) for free at <https://vimeo.com/19954170>. Now that's what I call collaboration.

With Love,

Iona



## Greta Honored

**Note from the Editor:** It's possible that our American readers have seen this wonderful news but I want to make sure the whole world knows about it. Greta Thunberg beat out Trump and other famous people on this one.

Submitted by Allen Hengst, Washington DC, USA

# What is the Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice?

**Founder/Editor:** Iona Conner

**Wire Editor:** Allen Hengst

**Established:** September 2013

**Web site:** [www.gobackclub.org](http://www.gobackclub.org)

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## Mission of Our Newspaper

The mission of *Groundswell News* is to be a beautiful, inspiring, uplifting journal which educates and enlightens people about climate change through scientific articles and stories by and about activists who are working to protect life on Earth and preserve natural resources.

## What is the Grassroots Coalition?

John and Iona Conner started this non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 1990. The mission was and remains “dedicated to cre-

ating the critical mass of active participants needed to being ecological justice to this Earth by providing information and resources to individuals which encourage and assist them to make lifestyle changes beneficial to the environment and to effectively grapple with local and global environmental concerns.”

## Who are we trying to attract?

We hope to reach people who are concerned about global warming and realize that they are part of the problem but don't know what to do. We invite them to sign up for our newspaper. Please tell your family and friends about us. They can go to [www.gobackclub.org](http://www.gobackclub.org) to learn more.

## What are we trying to achieve?

We want to rapidly increase the number of serious climate activists in the world and inspire them through stories from other activists. Our goal is to keep their spirits up, their energy strong, their hearts open, and their eyes bright and alive.

## Our Values

This journal is based on love for Earth, all people, all forms of life – plus air, clouds,

rain, snow, weather, oceans, forests, etc. We love Nature. We respect everyone and are willing to share our experiences, both good and bad, with others who may profit from them.

We are a global family.

## Guidelines for Submissions

I do not get directly involved in fundraising. To submit a story, you need to write a regular article about your work and submit it in a Word document with 2 or 3 photos, including captions and photo credits and then email it to me at [groundswellnews@pa.net](mailto:groundswellnews@pa.net). If you need funding, mention that in your last paragraph and be sure to give your contact information.

Since *Groundswell News* is a climate change activist newspaper, please be sure to mention how your work connects with fighting global warming somewhere.

I can't promise when or if your story will be published. Don't worry too much about punctuation or spelling since I proofread everything, just give me the history, heart and soul, dreams, and current project description plus your contact information at the end. I'll be eager to see what you submit.

Thanks so much.

## Fair Use Law: <https://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html>

Fair use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances. Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of uses—such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research—as examples of activities that may qualify as fair use. Section 107 calls for consideration of the following four factors in evaluating a question of fair use:

**(1) Purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes:** Courts look at how the party claiming fair use is using the copyrighted work and are more likely to find that nonprofit educational and noncommercial uses are fair. This does not mean, however, that all nonprofit educational and noncommercial uses are fair and all

commercial uses are not fair; instead, courts will balance the purpose and character of the use against the other factors below. Additionally, “transformative” uses are more likely to be considered fair. Transformative uses are those that add something new, with a further purpose or different character, and do not substitute for the original use of the work.

**(2) Nature of the copyrighted work:** This factor analyzes the degree to which the work that was used relates to copyright's purpose of encouraging creative expression. . . .

**(3) Amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole:** Under this factor, courts look at both the quantity and quality of the copyrighted material that was used. If the use includes a large portion of the copyrighted work, fair use is less likely to be found; if the use employs only a small amount of copyrighted material, fair use is more likely. . . .

**(4) Effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work:** Here, courts review whether, and to what extent, the unlicensed use harms the existing or future market for the copyright owner's original work. In assessing this factor, courts consider whether the use is hurting the current market for the original work (for example, by displacing sales of the original) and/or whether the use could cause substantial harm if it were to become widespread. . . .

Please note that the Copyright Office is unable to provide specific legal advice to individual members of the public about questions of fair use. See 37 C.F.R. 201.2(a)(3). For further information, see <https://www.copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html>.



Fair Use Logo



Photo: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Megan Rowling

Climate activists attend a "Peoples' Closing Plenary" at the U.N. climate talks in Madrid, which went into a day of overtime on Saturday, December 14, 2019.

## U.N. Climate Talks Have 'Failed the People', Activists Say

By Megan Rowling

Thomson Reuters Foundation: December 14, 2019

As talks drag on into a day of overtime, climate change activists say they fear an outcome tilted towards the interests of powerful polluters.

MADRID, Spain – In Chad, livestock herders are struggling to find grazing for their animals, and crops are not growing as they should due to worsening droughts and floods, according to Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, a member of the African country's Mbororo pastoralist community.

As a result, people are being pushed deeper into poverty and are fighting over shrinking resources, she told a gathering on the sidelines of the U.N. climate conference in Madrid on Saturday, as the talks pushed into a day of overtime. "The

climate emergency is now," she said. "We need our voices to be here... action must start now."

As the two-week negotiations struggled to overcome sharp disagreements, with Friday's scheduled ending repeatedly pushed back, Ibrahim spoke at a "Peoples' Closing Plenary" alongside others advocating on behalf of groups including women, youth, workers, and people with disabilities.

Many said the summit, known as COP25, had "failed the people and the planet" and called for "climate justice" instead of an outcome tilted towards the interests of powerful polluters.

In the formal talks, European governments, small island states, and the poorest nations struggled to persuade big-emitting countries - from the United States and Brazil to India, China, and Japan - to commit in 2020 to making their climate action plans more ambitious.

Jason Boberg, a New Zealand disability rights campaigner and filmmaker, told the people's assembly those with disabilities

faced serious threats from climate change. "From fires and power shut-offs in California to floods and other disasters, disabled people... are the first to be left behind and the first to die," he said.

Speakers criticized the reluctance of wealthy governments to provide financial support for people left hungry, water-short, and homeless by worsening extreme weather and rising seas.

And some decried plans to expand carbon emissions trading markets to include forests without guarantees the schemes would reduce emissions or protect local people's rights.

"Our forests are not for sale," said Ibrahim from Chad.

Tasneem Essop, executive director of the Climate Action Network International, said the anti-apartheid movement in her native South Africa had not believed it could ever end the system of racial segregation - but did in the end, thanks to global solidarity. "People's leadership will save

**Failure** continued on next page

# 'Targeted by My Own Government': Journalists Sue Trump DHS Over 'Coordinated Attack' on Press Freedom

"This interference effectively prevented me and other journalists from carrying out our reporting at the U.S.-Mexico border."

By Jessica Corbett  
Common Dreams: November 21, 2019

Five journalists who were tracked, detained, and interrogated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for reporting on conditions at the southern border in 2018 and 2019 brought a federal lawsuit against the Trump administration Wednesday for what the ACLU called an "unprecedented, coordinated attack on the freedom of the press."

The national ACLU, joined by chapters in New York and California, filed the suit (<https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/guan-v-wolf-complaint-declaratory-and-injunctive-relief>) in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York on behalf



Image: NBC7 San Diego via ACLU

*"When I saw my photo crossed out in a secret government database, I realized the secondary screening and interrogation wasn't random. I was being targeted by my own government for reporting on conditions at the border," said photojournalist Bing Guan.*

**Targeted** continued on next page

**Failure** continued from previous page  
from devastating climate change," the former government official told a crowd of listeners, of all ages and nationalities, seated on the conference center floor.

This year's U.N. talks have exposed a wide and growing gap between an increasingly vocal mass movement calling on politicians to step up climate action, and the slow pace of their response.

Scientists have said efforts to cut planet-warming emissions further and faster are urgently needed if the world is to have a chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the lower goal adopted in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Current national climate plans, if achieved, would lead to a temperature rise of at least 3 degrees, a level of warming that scientists say could lead to widespread food and water scarcity, more weather disasters, and rising seas.

The science and growing public demand for action is heaping pressure on governments to meet a deadline to strengthen their climate plans by the end of next year – but only about 80 smaller-emitting countries have so far said they will.

## 'Total Disconnect'

Alden Meyer, director of strategy and

policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists, said he had attended the climate negotiations since they first started in 1991. "But never have I seen the almost total disconnect we've seen here at COP25 in Madrid between what the science requires and the people of the world demand, and what the climate negotiations are delivering in terms of meaningful action," he said. "The planet is on fire and our window of escape is getting harder and harder to reach the longer we wait to act," he added.

Outside the talks, supporters of the international direct action group Extinction Rebellion stood on 12 blocks of ice with nooses around their necks to symbolize the disappearing time left to "change the trajectory and truly face the reality of the planetary climate and ecological emergency," the group said. There was a "need to come together now and think bigger" in the run-up to next year's U.N. summit in the Scottish city of Glasgow, it added.

The group also dumped a pile of horse manure on a roundabout in front of the Madrid conference venue, as a metaphor for its view on what was happening inside and where societies would end up unless they transform to a greener way of life, it said.

On Saturday morning, Colombia's Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs, Adriana

Mejía Hernández, told the U.N. conference a weak outcome from the Madrid talks would be "unacceptable for millions of people around the world asking for ambitious action."

Her words echoed similar calls by Chile and Spain.

Speaking for young people at the people's assembly, Jorge Martinez of Mexico said millions of people were striking on the streets "not because they want to, but because they are terrified of their future and the future of our planet."

Younger generations will continue to fight for a safer, cleaner world, he said, even if governments failed to step up enough to keep dangerous warming in check. "We will never accept the destruction you are bringing as inevitable," he added.

*Reporting by Megan Rowling @meganrowling; editing by Laurie Goering. Thomson Reuters Foundation is the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, climate change, women's and LGBT+ rights, human trafficking, and property rights. Visit <http://news.trust.org/climate>.*

Source: <http://news.trust.org/item/20191214232446-rjtwy/>

# Where Was The Urgency At COP25?

By Rolly Montpellier, *excerpt*  
Below 2C: December 13, 2019

COP 25 (Conference of the Parties) in Madrid is both different from and the same as the other 24 COPs. It's different because the world is now in a climate emergency. Alarm bells should be ringing around the world. But it's the same because it lacks that sense of urgency that a climate crisis requires. The climate conference ends today after nine days of climate talks.

## Why COP25 Was so Important

In 2019, millions flooded streets of cities worldwide to demand real action during the Global Climate Strikes. Extinction Rebellion – a global movement using disruptive non-violent disobedience – has also put the world on red alert about the likelihood of ecological collapse.

*"Thunberg has become the biggest voice on the biggest issue facing the planet – and the avatar of a broader generational shift in our culture that is playing out everywhere from the campuses of Hong Kong to the halls of Congress in Washington,"* said *Time* editor-in-chief Edward Felsenthal

*Time* has just named Greta Thunberg its person of the year marking the first time that a climate crisis activist is chosen. Her rise to global influence has galvanized mil-

lions of followers around the world to rise up and demand more climate ambition from world leaders. . . .

This is also the year this is the year a bombshell report showed the world is way off track in reducing emissions at anything like the pace necessary to meet the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The next 12 months will be "make it or break it" for the Paris Agreement. Under the Agreement, governments agreed to upgrade their climate plans and boost their climate ambition in 2020. COP25 is meant to set the table for the next decade of climate action. It's meant to give governments an opportunity to flex their climate muscles and show the world how they will deliver.

During her speech at COP25, Greta



Photo: Screenshot from YouTube video. COP25

*Greta Thunberg speaks: "The biggest danger is not inaction. The real danger is when politicians and CEOs are making it look like real action is happening when in fact almost nothing is being done apart from clever accounting and creative PR."*

Thunberg was brutally honest about the failure of world leaders to act with the urgency that the climate crisis demands." There is no sense of urgency whatsoever. Our leaders are not behaving as if we were in an emergency. In an emergency, you change your behavior," said Greta. . . .

**Source:** <https://below2c.org/2019/12/where-was-the-urgency-at-cop25/>

**Targeted** *continued from previous page* of Bing Guan, Go Nakamura, Mark Abramson, Kitra Cahana, and Ariana Drehsler. The five are all U.S. citizens who traveled to Mexico as professional photojournalists.

"A core principle of our democracy is the freedom of the press," Esha Bhandari (staff attorney with ACLU's Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project) said in a statement. "That freedom is imperiled when the government uses the pretext of border screening to interrogate journalists who were simply doing their jobs."

The named defendants in the case are acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf and the leaders of two agencies DHS oversees – Mark Morgan of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Matthew Albence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"Plaintiffs were each impermissibly compelled to disclose information about their journalism work and activities when they sought to re-enter the United States," the complaint explains. "The border officers' questioning aimed at uncovering plaintiffs' sources of information and their observations as journalists was unconstitutional."

Some of the journalists were asked to identify "instigators" from a book of head-

shots, questioned about previous reporting on conflict zones in the Middle East, and required to show U.S. government agents photographs they had taken of migrants on the Mexican side of the border.

"One of the journalists in the case was also denied entry to Mexico during the time period of the interrogations, preventing her from continuing her work there," according to an ACLU blog post.

The journalists are "seeking declaratory judgment that such questioning and compelled disclosure of information violated the First Amendment" as well as "an injunction requiring defendants to expunge any records they have retained regarding the unlawful questioning and to inform plaintiffs whether those records have been disclosed to other agencies, governments, or individuals."

"As a freelance photojournalist covering news and various issues," said Abramson, "I want to know that I am free to work without government interference."

The lawsuit came after NBC7 San Diego reported in March 2019 that the Trump administration was keeping a database of journalists and "instigators" involved with the so-called migrant caravan in late 2018 and early 2019 – which, at the time, the

ACLU's Bhandari condemned as "an outrageous violation of the First Amendment."

Recalling that report in a statement Wednesday, Guan explained that, "When I saw my photo crossed out in a secret government database, I realized the secondary screening and interrogation wasn't random. I was being targeted by my own government for reporting on conditions at the border."

Cahana said that, "Journalists are democracy's first line of defense" and highlighted how the case has broad implications for U.S. government interference in press freedom. "We need to be able to work without fear of being put on a secret government surveillance list or having alerts placed upon our passports," Cahana added. "This interference effectively prevented me and other journalists from carrying out our reporting at the U.S.-Mexico border. It's an issue that should concern everyone."

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**Source:** <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2019/11/21/targeted-my-own-government-journalists-sue-trump-dhs-over-coordinated-attack-press>



Photo: Peter Bregg, *Water for Life: an African Photo Exhibit Our World*, UN University

*Women in Nyanza province, Kenya, walk each day to collect water for cooking, drinking, and cleaning.*

## African Cities Bet on New Technology to Fix Growing Water Shortages

By Nellie Peyton  
Thomson Reuters Foundation: December 19, 2019

DAKAR, Senegal – From solar-powered ground pumps to 3D-printed filters, new technology can help solve water shortages in African cities facing rapid growth, entrepreneurs and policymakers said.

These were among the solutions discussed at a summit hosted by the Islamic Development Bank in Senegal's capital Dakar this week, focused on how innovation can help African cities cope with the pressures of climate change and population growth.

One in three people in Africa lacks access to a clean, reliable water source, and the figure is rising, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which estimates that poor sanitation causes 115 deaths *each hour* on the continent.

African countries should leapfrog old technology rather than playing catch-up when it comes to urban infrastructure such as water and transport, said Senegal's president Macky Sall. "Africa's delay in terms of urban management offers us the opportunity to take advantage of a new generation of available technology," Sall said, speaking on Monday at the Islamic Development Bank's "Transformers Summit."

Senegal's urban residents are projected to reach 60% of the total population in 2030, up from 43% in 2013, according to the World Bank, as agriculture suffers from the impacts of climate change and people increasingly move to cities in search of jobs. But like many African countries it lacks the infrastructure to support the shift. Outside the capital, only two-thirds of urban households were connected to the water network and one-third to sewage systems in 2016, the World Bank said.

To remedy this, Senegal launched a 30 billion CFA Franc (\$50 million) fund for entrepreneurship last year. The Islamic Development Bank, which is based in Saudi Arabia, also launched a \$500 million "Transform Fund" for entrepreneurship in 2018. Among the 34 Transform Fund recipients who attended the conference, at least nine had projects relating to water access.

"This is something that is not going to be solved unless you get private capital involved," said Christelle Kwizera, founder of a water treatment and distribution company in Rwanda, adding that the main obstacle for African governments is lack of funds.

Kwizera's company, Water Access Rwanda, reclaims broken hand pumps and turns them into solar-powered kiosks that

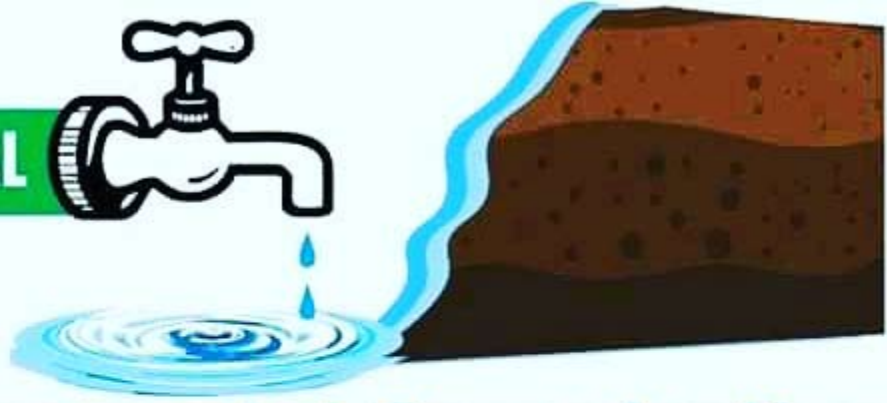
pipe water to homes, she said. It currently has 57,000 daily users.

Mauricio Cordova, another entrepreneur, started his company, Fair Cap, in Peru with the goal of providing clean water to people affected by floods, cyclones, or other disasters. He and his team used open-source design and 3D printing to create a small portable filter that screws onto plastic water bottles like a cap. A larger model was tested in Mozambique after Cyclone Idai this year, and is in production. "The problem is so big, I think we need many solutions," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Senegal is also incorporating new technology and now uses "smart meters" that can remotely track changes in water consumption in the city and help identify leaks, said Abdoulaye Sene, a longtime advisor to the government on hydraulics. But even with new solutions, it will take African states a long time to catch up with demand, he added. "Now governments are more and more in a state of doing things out of urgency, not because they were planned," Sene said.

Source: <http://news.trust.org/item/20191210160434-7o83c/>

**SOIL, WATER  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION**



**Non Governmental Organization**

*Empowering the communities lives*

*Email:swecf100@gmail.com*

By Victor Mutuku Mutielega  
Water Resources Engineer, Kenya

The Soil, Water & Environmental Conservation foundation (SWECF KENYA) is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which works under Gospel Impartation Church G.I.C Kenya, whose mission is to cooperate with other development partners and local communities, in particular the rural poor communities of northern and eastern Kenya in supporting the local initiatives.

SWECF is aiming at reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development through use of resources found in various areas in the community, and spreading the Gospel. SWECF also seeks to empower people to develop the capacity and means of accessing equally to basic social services as a requirement in the efforts to contribute to their own development, with an understanding that it is through participation and empowerment of the people that sustainable development can be achieved.

SWECF believes that properly mandated, empowered, and informed marginalized communities, and in particular women, youth, and People can contribute to decisions.

The organization was established in 2018 by the founder Victor Mutunga under Gospel Impartation Church Kenya. It was established to operate mostly within Northern and Eastern (arid and semi-arid) areas in Kenya. It started by establishing environmental conservation and water development programs in Mwingi and Nguni Kitui counties and the northern region of Kenya

in collaboration with the local communities and other partners in respective villages.

To support local initiatives of the communities and empower them in their efforts to fight poverty and access basic service equally, through awareness raising, animation, groups formation, leadership and training in management skills, assisting disadvantaged individuals and groups to gain greater control over local resources and decision making, and of their ability and right to define collective goals and participate in making decisions on matters that affect their daily lives.

The core areas of activities are in the fields of economic development, basic social services, environment, women and youths, justice, human rights advocacy, and awareness raising, and other assistance to the disadvantaged groups in society.

SWECF has gained some experience in running and managing various community-involving development projects, working in particular with the groups made by communities living in arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya.

The Directors control administration and management of the organization's affairs and its projects, with the assistance of project teams and seek external consultancy where necessary. Its financial reports are prepared periodically and get audited. The Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.) is the supreme organ and meets every year to deliberate on the organization's matters and Policies.

In carrying out its programs, SWECF is

supported by the services of donors and Volunteers.

**VISION:** To change the community's life.

**MISSION:** To contribute with emphasis on long-term measures to promoting livelihood and sustainable development aimed at reducing poverty, water scarcity, and environmental conservation.

**SWECF PURSUES THIS BY:**

Actively entering into partnerships with women's groups, youth groups, and self-help groups involved in development in general. It focuses on projects at the community level addressing food security, water, environmental management, and Christianity programs.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

Service to the community, Team work, Accountability, Transparency, Justice, Sustainable development, Sustainable resource generation and use of Democracy, Honesty, Self-regulation and Control, Humility, Professionalism, Gender equity, Participation, Partnership building, Equality, Joint decision making, and People-centeredness.

**OUR BELIEF:**

We believe among others 1. To establish partnerships based on a long term perspective, and 2. That it is by working with other stakeholders that we shall maximize the benefits to our target community.

**OUR OBJECTIVES:**

1. To ensure there is enough water to

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**Kenya** *continued from previous page*

communities by doing water projects i.e. sand dams, earth dams, rock catchments, shallow wells, boreholes, concrete tanks, hand-wash programs.

2. Food security programs. The areas we are focusing on receive little amounts of rainfall leading to draught and the community suffers a lot. We implement food security programs to support them.

3. Environmental conservation programs. We train communities about the environment and how to conserve. We do afforestation programs, land management programs, new agriculture technology, and the way to conserve.

4. Disaster-risk-reduction programs.

5. Christianity and orphan programs. We spread the Gospel to the same communities and help orphans with food, shelter, etc.

**COLLABORATORS/NETWORKS:**

SWECF collaborates and networks with self-help groups, volunteers, NGOs, CBOs, county government, national government.

**MEMBERSHIP:**

Membership is open to all, people to support us (donors/ volunteers), community groups, and other NGOs who may want to join SWECF as it tries to improve livelihoods of the target community and works towards all people gaining influence on sustainable development affecting their own lives.



**Photo: Victor Mutunga**

*Mr. Boniface Malonza, field manager, is talking to people in the communities at Muangeni Village, Nuu division, MWINGI Central Kenya. He is giving them information about Environmental Conservation because the area is very dry and needs a lot of concern.*

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**Twitter:** @ Soil, Water Envir2

**Facebook:** Soil, Water & Environmental Conservation Foundation

**GoFundMe:**

# Awaken

By Jeannette Bartelt, Maryland USA

**From this day forward only Love will direct our path forward**

**As caretakers brought here for the higher purpose**

**Of knowing the true meaning of caring.**

**Caring about the here and now**

**About our connected futures.**

**For too long we have forgotten about our purpose for being here.**

**AWAKEN**



# *A Blessing For Anyone*

By Caitlin Johnstone

May all of your illusions be shattered beyond your ability to reassemble them.  
May you learn quickly from your failures and successes.  
May life treat you how you treat life.  
May you reap swiftly that which you sow, and may it be highly educational for you.  
May all of the hidden parts of yourself enter the light.  
May all of your unfelt feelings be felt.  
May you have a crystal clear glimpse of your own boundlessness.  
May you have a crystal clear glimpse of your own insignificance.  
May your inner monologue cease and may you experience stillness.  
May you experience the beauty of each moment that the babbling mind eclipses.  
May you uncover the mystery that hides behind the veil of separation.  
May you know true courage.  
May you know true wisdom.  
May you know true humility.  
May you know true truth.  
May you know yourself intimately, without disguises or distortions.  
May you meet the world lucidly, without projections or prejudices.  
May you perceive the world clearly, without filters or fantasies.  
May your delusions disappoint you and may authenticity astonish you.  
May everything you have constructed in untruth crumble before your eyes.  
May life conspire to unmake every false object you have made.  
May you live each moment fully, not for the goal of grandiose achievement, but for living itself.  
May you truly, deeply see yourself, and find there what you've always been looking for.  
May you be truly, deeply seen by someone else. May you let yourself be seen by them.

May you end your war against the feminine.  
May you finally let in the enormity of what your mother did for you.  
May you find a home in your body.  
May your body feel at home on this Earth.

May the Earth feel your sorrow.  
May you feel the Earth's forgiveness.  
May the Earth feel your gratitude.  
May the Earth feel your love.  
May thrum of the Earth dance through you.  
May you fall in love with that dance.  
Amen.



Photos Courtesy Yamora South Sudan

Trainee Esther Letiwa Manikese demonstrates how to use a locally-made hand-washing facility known as Tipping Tap and how to wash hands after visiting the toilet. The People around her are participants learning the process. Among the participants are: Amanda Samrani, Mesback Shiyuka, Martine Odbhimbo, Lawrence Mura, Sisters Francisca and Rachel. Trainees are from different parts of East Africa including one representative from South Sudan, Esther Letiwa, Head of Natural Medicine and Women Empowerment. The Sisters attending the training believe healing people with tropical plants/herbs is appreciating what God made.

## Natural Medicinal Training in Africa

Submitted by Justoson Victor Yuasa  
Executive Director, Yamora South Sudan

From report by Letiwa Esther Manikese

The Yamora\* South Sudan held a six-day training in November called Natural Aid Yei South Sudan. The event was held at the Subiaco Retreat Center in Nairobi, Kenya. Twenty-two participants came from different parts of the world like Nigeria, America, Uganda, Kenya, Austria, and South Sudan.

### Activities included:

- Walking in the natural medicinal gardens to know the different types of plants with medicinal values;
- Herbal soap making, ointments, and oils using natural medicinal plants;

- Preparing medicinal activated charcoal and Blackstone;
- Learning the different types of natural plants with medicinal values in different tropics;
- Knowing the different diseases in different regions and their different symptoms and signs;
- How to prepare the land and how to plant natural medicinal plants, for instance Artemisia; and
- Pest control against medicinal plants and their treatment.

### The objectives were:

- Knowing the different types of natural plants with medicinal values. For instance pawpaw seeds, which are very good for treating wounds, guava leaves, eucalyptus leaves for treating cough and flu;

- Learning to prepare natural medicine out of medicinal plants, for instance cough syrup using onions and sugar;
- Learning the values of different plants in the tropics for instance Artemisia, which is used in many ways for different reasons;
- How to administer medication to a patient using natural medicine. For instance how to clean an affected wound using pawpaw seeds;
- Knowledge on how to maintain the natural medicinal values in a plant. One is muringa which has a lot of nutritious value especially for improving one's immune system; and
- Learn ways of propagating and transplanting medicinal plants.

Training continued on next page



(left) Trainee Esther Letina Manikese is checking the part of the Pawpaw which is used in making soap, which they use it for cleaning different types of wounds. (right) Esther Letina Manikese, Director of the Training Center, is in an Artimisia garden in Rural Extension for Africa's Poor (REAP) in Nairobi, Kenya. She is pointing to Artimisia, an herbal medicine used for treating many diseases, especially Malaria.

### Training continued from previous page

The facilitators were Dr. Roger Sharland (Director of REAP, Rural Extension for Africa's Poor), Annie Sigie, Rev. Rosalia Oyweka, and Pastor George Matengo.

In her evaluation, Esther wrote, "The training was conducted well as estimated in the designated days and was so enjoyable and successful completed." Also, "The facilitator was able to take participants through all the selected topics that included rules and regulations, practical's roles, responsibilities of the participants and the facilitators in the training or in their homes."

Participants also learned the different types of natural plants with medicinal values in the tropics, how to prepare ointments, oils, activated charcoal, Blackstone and soap making and water purifications using the Muringa seeds, how to prepare medicine and administer medications.

They learned "prevention of common diseases and diseases that call for referral

to main hospitals. Participants learnt about other types of natural herbal medicine brought, introduced, and shared by the colleagues from different African Countries."

When asked about challenges and constraints, Esther wrote:

- Limited time for networking and sharing with other Colleagues from various organizations and countries in the Training;
- Difficulties in getting some personal equipment and requirements for personal practice. For instance the caustic soda for making soap;
- Time duration for the training was short; and
- The quality of services received from the service provider especially the food and timing were not satisfactory.

When invited to list the next steps, here's what she replied:

- The training should at least end early to allow participants to have time to share

their different knowledge acquired among themselves.

- There is need for training materials and equipment for example machines for making capsules, for soap making there is need for Oil and Caustic Soda given to the participants as take away to allow them to do practical's on their own.

- The period for the training should be increased to at least to two weeks to allow students have proper knowledge on the different types of natural herbal plans.

The next training shall be in May 2020.

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\*Yamora means people coming together as a family to offer their community different services.

# Our Vanishing World: Birds

By Robert Burrowes, Australia  
Pressenza International Press Agency  
December 18, 2019

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is estimated that the total number of passenger pigeons in the United States was about three billion birds. The bird was immensely abundant, as illustrated by this passage written by the famous ornithologist, naturalist and painter John James Audubon:<sup>1</sup>

*"I dismounted, seated myself on an eminence, and began to mark with my pencil, making a dot for every flock that passed. In a short time finding the task which I had undertaken impracticable, as the birds poured in countless multitudes, I rose, and counting the dots then put down, found that 163 had been made in twenty-one minutes. I traveled on, and still met more the farther I proceeded. The air was literally filled with Pigeons; the light of noon-day was obscured as by an eclipse, the dung fell in spots, not unlike melting flakes of snow; and the continued buzz of wings had a tendency to lull my senses to repose... Before sunset I reached Louisville, distance from Hardensburgh fifty-five miles. The Pigeons were still passing in undiminished numbers, and continued to do so for three days in succession."* See 'Passenger Pigeon.'<sup>2</sup>

So numerous was this bird that, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the passenger pigeon was one of the most abundant birds on Earth.

In 1914 it was extinct.

While new settlements kept reducing the bird's habitat, more importantly, it was literally hunted from the sky. Shot for its meat.

So I have two questions for you? When is the last time that you saw a flock of birds so vast that "the light of noon-day was obscured as by an eclipse"? And when did you last see a flock of just 20 birds?

Sobering to ponder, isn't it?

## The Origin of Birds

Birds evolved from small carnivorous dinosaurs of the Late Jurassic and in the 65 million years since the extinction of the rest of the dinosaurs, this ancestral lineage diversified into the major groups of birds alive today. See "The origin of birds."<sup>3</sup>

Because they did not exist during the first five mass extinction events on Earth, birds have been spared the widespread



Frontispiece from a volume of articles,  
*The Passenger Pigeon*, Print date 1907 (Mershon, editor)  
*Passenger Pigeon (Columba Migratoria)*  
Upper bird, male; lower, female.

extinctions suffered by those species that did exist in earlier eras.

## Extinctions of Birds in Prehistory and History

Nevertheless, the fossil record tells us of the existence of prehistoric birds that became extinct before the Late Quaternary (that is, the past half to one million years) and thus occurred in the absence of significant human interference – see 'List of fossil bird genera'<sup>4</sup> – while various sources tell us of both prehistoric and historic bird species, including flightless megafauna birds, that became extinct between 40,000 BCE and 1500 AD and "was coincident with the expansion of Homo sapiens beyond Africa and Eurasia, and in most cases, anthropogenic factors played a crucial part in their extinction, be it through hunting, introduced predators or habitat alteration" See 'List of Late Quaternary

prehistoric bird species.'<sup>5</sup>

Of course, there is an even wider range of evidence of bird extinctions since 1500. See 'List of recently extinct bird species.'<sup>6</sup> Most notably perhaps, given the symbolism it has since acquired, the dodo, a flightless bird of Mauritius, was driven to extinction by 1681 but not before it was carefully drawn. See 'Dodo.'<sup>7</sup>

## How many bird species are there on Earth now?

While one recent estimate – see 'Scaling laws predict global microbial diversity'<sup>8</sup> – indicates that Earth may be the home to one trillion species (the vast bulk of which are microorganisms such as bacteria, archaea and microscopic fungi), of which only an estimated 8.7 million species fall into the usual and simpler categories of plants, birds, animals, fish, amphibians, insects and reptiles, the most recent research conducted by George F. Barrowclough, Joel Cracraft, John Klicka and Robert M. Zink and published in 2016 indicated that there are just 18,043 species of birds worldwide. See 'How Many Kinds of Birds Are There and Why Does It Matter?'<sup>9</sup>

Somewhat controversially – see 'New Study Doubles the World's Number of Bird Species By Redefining "Species"'<sup>10</sup> – this figure is nearly twice as many as previously thought because the study focused on 'hidden' avian diversity: birds that

look similar to one another or were thought to interbreed but are actually different species. In any case, whether there are just 10,000 species of birds, 11,000+ as estimated by the recognized international authority BirdLife International – see 'Introducing the IUCN Red List'<sup>11</sup> – or even 18,000, just like other species of life on Earth, birds are now under siege in a way they have never been before.

## Killing Birds in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and Early 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

More than 100 years have passed since the passenger pigeon became extinct. However, while one might have hoped that humans had become more adept at nurturing populations of birds, the reality is that we are continuing to drive bird populations to extinction. Moreover, we are now doing this with breathtaking efficiency,

*Birds continued on next page*

### Birds *continued from previous page*

slaughtering birds by the millions in ever-shortening timeframes.

As a result, the fate of the passenger pigeon has been replicated many times over with a vast number of bird species passing through the International Union for Conservation of Nature's eight preliminary categories – Not Evaluated, Data Deficient, Least Concern, Near Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered, Critically Endangered, Extinct in the Wild – before reaching the ninth and final category: Extinct. See 'IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria'.<sup>12</sup> At the moment, the 'IUCN Red List of Threatened Species'<sup>13</sup> identifies 14% of remaining bird species as 'threatened with extinction'. Also see 'Introducing the IUCN Red List'.<sup>14</sup>

Of course, this ongoing assault on birds is well documented in the scientific literature, along with descriptions of long-standing causes as well as those that are more recent.

In recently published research on the status of birds in North America, Dr. Kenneth V. Rosenberg<sup>15</sup> led an international team of scientists from seven institutions in analyzing the population trends of 529 bird species on the North American continent. Their study quantified, for the first time, the total decline in bird populations in the continental U.S. and Canada: a loss of 2.9 billion breeding adult birds, with devastating losses among birds in every biome, since 1970. Moreover, their research revealed that "declines are not restricted to rare and threatened species – those once considered common and widespread are also diminished." See 'Decline of the North American avifauna'<sup>16</sup> and 'Vanishing: More Than 1 in 4 Birds Has Disappeared in the Last 50 Years'.<sup>17</sup>

Like scholars researching dramatic declines and extinctions of other species, such as insects, Rosenberg and his colleagues stress that their results have "major implications for ecosystem integrity, the conservation of wildlife more broadly, and policies associated with the protection of birds and native ecosystems on which they depend." While species extinctions "have defined the global biodiversity crisis," extinction "begins with loss in abundance of individuals that can result in compositional and functional changes of ecosystems."

Hence, the staggering loss of bird abundance "signals an urgent need to address threats to avert future avifaunal collapse and associated loss of ecosystem integrity, function, and services." See 'Decline of the North American avifauna'.<sup>18</sup>

In more blunt language "the most comprehensive inventory ever done for North

American birds, points to ecosystems in disarray because of habitat loss and other factors that have yet to be pinned down." See 'Billions of North American birds have vanished'.<sup>19</sup> And, yet more bluntly: "The scale of loss portrayed in the [Rosenberg et.al.] study is unlike anything recorded in modern natural history." See 'Vanishing: More Than 1 in 4 Birds Has Disappeared in the Last 50 Years'.<sup>20</sup>

Even more importantly, however, pointing out that the study results "transcend the world of birds," Rosenberg explained that, "These bird losses are a strong signal that our human-altered landscapes are losing their ability to support birdlife" and, "That is an indicator of a coming collapse of the overall environment." See 'Vanishing: More Than 1 in 4 Birds Has Disappeared in the Last 50 Years'.<sup>21</sup>

Is North America alone in its decimation of bird populations? Far from it. Other research and data have revealed that, "Farmland birds in Europe have declined by over 50 percent collectively in the last 30 or 40 years," according to Professor Richard Gregory, head of species monitoring and research at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in the UK where, according to Martin Harper, director of conservation at the RSPB, "Our beleaguered farmland birds have declined by 56 percent between 1970 and 2015 along with declines in other wildlife linked to changes in agricultural practices, including the use of pesticides."

And, Professor Romain Julliard, a conservation biologist at France's National Museum of Natural History, confessed his 'shock' when the latest research revealed that France has lost one-third of its birds in the past 15 years in what is being labeled a 'dramatic collapse' and 'ecological catastrophe' particularly because the decline has accelerated dramatically in recent years. See "'Shocking" decline in birds across Europe due to pesticide use, say scientists'.<sup>22</sup>

In Germany, bird populations are vanishing with scientists using words like 'decimated' and 'collapse' to describe the enormity of the problem. In a recent study of government data, the German environmental organization Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) estimated "that more than 25 million birds [15% of the country's total bird population] disappeared from Germany over the past 12 years." See 'Über zwölf Millionen Vogelbrutpaare weniger in Deutschland', 'Insect and bird populations declining dramatically in Germany'.<sup>24</sup> and "'Decimated": Germany's birds disappear as insect abundance plummets 76%.<sup>25</sup> But why?

While habitat destruction and other factors played roles, scientists have also long linked pesticide use to insect decline – a reasonable assumption given that killing insects is the purpose of pesticides – and research clearly demonstrates that pesticides are killing more than target insects. For instance, a 2008 study demonstrated low but persistent levels of a common neonicotinoid pesticide in aquatic ecosystems can kill off or reduce the growth of insects (such as mosquitoes) that have an aquatic phase. See 'Acute and Chronic Toxicity of Imidacloprid to the Aquatic Invertebrates Chironomus tentans and Hyalella azteca under Constant- and Pulse-Exposure Conditions'<sup>26</sup> and "'Decimated": Germany's birds disappear as insect abundance plummets 76%.<sup>27</sup>

In essence, the problem is that killing the insects is tantamount to killing the birds that feed on them.

Another recent study came to the same conclusion. The study, conducted in the Lake Constance area in southern Germany, found that the population of six of the most common birds had "declined massively." According to Hans-Guenther Bauer of the Max Planck Institute for Behavioral Biology: "These are truly shocking figures, especially when you consider that the decline in birds began decades before our first data collection in 1980."

Why is it happening? According to Bauer, a key reason for the decline is the loss of food. "This confirms what we have long suspected. The death of insects caused by humans has a massive impact on our birds." To stem the tide of losses, scientists are calling for a rethink in agricultural and forestry policy including "drastic restrictions on insecticides and herbicides in agriculture, forestry, public areas and private gardens" and significantly less fertilization. See 'Scientists fear "collapse" of bird populations in Germany'.<sup>28</sup>

As is the case elsewhere around the world, birds in Africa also face a wide variety of threats, the most significant of which are habitat fragmentation, degradation, and destruction as well as direct impacts including hunting and trapping (mainly for meat and trafficking). See 'Multiple threats are driving threatened birds towards extinction in Africa'.<sup>29</sup>

But nowhere is safe with the killing of migratory birds in China – see 'Market trade is fuelling the killing of migratory birds in Northern China'<sup>30</sup> – and various factors adversely impacting penguins in Antarctica – see 'Climate-driven reductions in krill abundance have caused

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Adélie penguin declines<sup>31</sup> – just two more of many examples that could be cited.

## Illegal Hunting and Trapping of Birds

According to BirdLife International,<sup>32</sup> the organization responsible for monitoring the welfare of birds for the IUCN's Red List, "The illegal killing and taking of wild birds remains a major threat on a global scale" with recent examples including the illegal poisoning of vultures in Sub-Saharan Africa, the illegal shooting of raptors in Europe and North America, the illegal trapping of passerines (perching birds) in Asia, and the illegal capture for the bird trade in South America.

For example, based on extensive research over many years in relation to bird killing during migratory flights across the Mediterranean and through Northern and Central Europe and the Caucasus, BirdLife International has compiled a series of reports. These reports document massive illegal killing of birds, often in ways that constitute torture, and totaling in excess of 25 million birds annually, including birds of species that are threatened with extinction. For recent reports, see "The Killing 2.0: A View to a Kill", 'Assessing the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean, and establishing a basis for systematic monitoring',<sup>33</sup> and 'Review of illegal killing and taking of birds in Northern and Central Europe and the Caucasus'.<sup>34</sup> For a more detailed scientific report on this issue, see 'Preliminary assessment of the scope and scale of illegal killing and taking of birds in the Mediterranean'.<sup>35</sup>

But if you would simply prefer to be revolted, then watch BirdLife's one minute video: 'Help us STOP illegal #birdkilling'.<sup>36</sup> Or read a straightforward account of how 'innocent' human behaviours can be deadly for birds, in this case by 'vacuuming' millions of sleeping birds into oblivion each year during olive harvesting at night. See 'Millions of Birds Killed by Nighttime Harvesting in Mediterranean'.<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately, if you think the descriptions and video of bird killing above are bad, you won't be impressed with the sheer insanity that militarized humans can display: "The Farmagusta area of Cyprus comes out as the worst place for illegally killing birds in the Mediterranean, while the British Territory in Cyprus is also affected, with the Dhekelia UK military base seeing hundreds of thousands of birds killed each autumn. The Ministry of Defence has started a programme to remove illegally-planted trees and shrubs

in the area, which trappers use for cover and to lure birds in." See 'Millions of Birds Killed in the Mediterranean'.<sup>38</sup> So, instead of ordering soldiers to stop shooting birds while using a combination of education and law enforcement measures to prevent civilians doing so, they removed "illegally planted trees and shrubs"!

## Wild Bird Trafficking

Another major killer of birds is the wildlife trade. Birds are often killed as a 'byproduct' of the trade in exotic birds, most of which is illegal, but which is a multi-billion dollar a year industry along with human, weapons, currency, and drug trafficking. Equally importantly, however, once traded, birds no longer form part of their original habitat and hence they are lost as contributing and breeding members of that ecosystem. According to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)<sup>39</sup>, species listed in Appendix I of the Convention are considered to be threatened with extinction and are not allowed to be traded commercially. There are currently 161 bird species on Appendix I. However, birds included on Appendix II are allowed to enter international trade "under specific controlled circumstances;" there are 1,300 bird species on this appendix. See 'Wild Bird Trade and CITES' and 'CITES Appendices I, II and III'.<sup>41</sup>

In theory, state parties are obliged to develop national legislation effectively implementing the obligations of the Convention including setting sustainable quotas for Appendix II species. But I am sure that you can imagine how well this regime works given the incredibly profitable wildlife trafficking industry, in which birds are a crucial component. In fact, "One third (3,337) of living bird species [that is, 2,000 species more than those that are "legal"] have been recorded as traded internationally for the pet trade and other purposes." Of these species, 266 (that is, 8% of those internationally traded) are considered globally threatened. See 'The Red List Index for internationally traded bird species shows their deterioration in status'.<sup>42</sup>

And if the domestic trade in birds is taken into account as well, then, "Nearly 4,000 bird species involving several million individuals annually are subject to domestic or international trade with finches, weavers, parrots and raptors being some of the most heavily affected groups." See 'Wild Bird Trade and CITES'.<sup>43</sup>

For a candid account of bird trafficking at its origin which describes the fate of macaw chicks being stolen from their

forest nests in Ecuador, see 'Wildlife Trafficking'.<sup>44</sup>

## Seabirds

In relation to seabirds, one recent study found that the global population of these birds declined by 70% between 1950 and 2010 as a result of a multiplicity of threats. These threats included "entanglement in fishing gear, overfishing of food sources, climate change, pollution, disturbance, direct exploitation, development, energy production, and introduced species (predators such as rats and cats introduced to breeding islands that were historically free of land-based predators)." See 'Population Trend of the World's Monitored Seabirds, 1950-2010'.<sup>45</sup>

Another study concluded just recently, was "the first objective quantitative assessment of the threats to all 359 species of seabirds" and identified the main threats to their survival while outlining priority actions for their conservation. Using the standardized 'Threats Classification Scheme' developed for the IUCN Red List to objectively assess threats to each species, a team of ten scientists identified the top three threats to seabirds – in terms of number of species affected and average impact – to be as follows: invasive alien species (particularly rats and cats) which affected 165 species across all of the most threatened groups; bycatch in fisheries which 'only' affected 100 species but with the greatest average impact; and the climate catastrophe which affected 96 species. "Overfishing, hunting/trapping and disturbance were also identified as major threats to seabirds." The study emphasized that 70% of seabirds, especially those that are globally threatened, face multiple threats. For the three most threatened groups of seabirds – albatrosses, petrels, and penguins – it is essential to tackle both terrestrial and marine threats to reverse declines. See 'Threats to seabirds: A global assessment'.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, however, another problem that has been getting insufficient attention is the result of the expanding impacts of the rapidly increasing levels of ocean acidification, ocean warming, ocean carbon flows, and ocean plastics. Taken in isolation each of these changes clearly has negative consequences for the ocean. All these shifts taken together, however, result in a rapid and serious decline in ocean health and this, in turn, adversely impacts all species dependent on the ocean, including seabirds. Moreover, on top of these problems is the issue of oxygen availability

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given that oxygen in the air or water is of paramount importance to most living organisms. As the recently released report 'Ocean deoxygenation: Everyone's problem. Causes, impacts, consequences and solutions'<sup>47</sup> describes in some detail, oxygen levels are currently declining across the ocean.

But to graphically illustrate just one of the threats to seabirds, consider the impact of our chronic overfishing which is depleting the oceans of fish. In November 2019, thousands of short-tailed shearwater birds migrating from Alaska were washed up dead on Sydney's iconic beaches in Australia. Moreover, thousands more shearwaters died out at sea in clear confirmation of the incredible fish shortages in the Pacific Ocean. After spending the summer in Alaska, the shearwaters were migrating back to southern Australia to breed: a 14,000km (9,000-mile) trip over the Pacific that requires the birds to be at full strength.

Unfortunately, vast numbers died due to lack of food because the krill and other fish they feed on have vanished. But if you think the problem only occurred along or at the end of their journey, in fact there had been "a series of catastrophic die-offs" before and shortly after the birds departed to head south with thousands of shearwaters (along with puffins, murres, and auklets, too) lying dead from starvation on the beaches of Alaska and on Russia's Chukotka Peninsula back in mid-year as well. The overall 'large die-off' pattern has been repeating since 2015 with little knowledge of the full extent of the crisis because millions of the birds 'die at sea'. See 'Fish all gone!... Millions of small sea birds died since 2015'<sup>48</sup>

Tragically though, as touched on above, an ocean emptied of fish is not the only hazard that seabirds have no choice but to attempt to navigate. An ocean full of plastic – with concentrations up to 580,000 pieces per square kilometer – is also deceiving many seabirds into attempting to eat pieces of plastic and this only complicates efforts by seabirds to get adequate nutrition. See 'Threat of plastic pollution to seabirds is global, pervasive, and increasing'<sup>49</sup> and 'Nearly Every Seabird on Earth Is Eating Plastic'<sup>50</sup> This is graphically illustrated in a photo of a dead albatross – see 'Laysan Albatrosses' Plastic Problem'<sup>51</sup> – although, tragically, plastic is not the only non-food item that is consumed by and is killing these majestic birds, with an abandoned U.S. military base on Midway Atoll – where 65% of the global albatross population breeds – playing a vital role

too. See 'Study shows lead-based paint is poisoning albatross chicks at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.'<sup>52</sup>

But why do seabirds eat plastic instead of correctly identifying food? Well, one recent research project provided "the first evidence that, in addition to looking like food, plastic debris may also confuse seabirds that hunt by smell." See 'Marine plastic debris emits a keystone infochemical for olfactory foraging seabirds'<sup>53</sup> and 'The oceans are full of plastic, but why do seabirds eat it?'<sup>54</sup>

### **Other Threats to Birds**

Another threat faced by birds in the nuclear age is the outcome of the radioactive contamination of the Earth in many places. For example, while there are 'severe reductions in species richness and density' in the regions surrounding the sites of the Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear catastrophes, surviving birds display a wide range of deformities and dysfunctions, notably including impaired brain development as reflected by head volume with its negative implications for cognitive ability and hence viability. See 'Chernobyl Birds Have Smaller Brains'<sup>55</sup> and 'Bird populations near Fukushima are more diminished than expected.'<sup>56</sup>

Yet another threat to birds is posed by the deployment of 5G. "Typical effects of radiation from cellular communication antennas on resident, breeding, and migratory birds [include] site abandonment, feather deformation, locomotion problems, weight loss, weakness, reduced survivorship and death." Moreover, it can "blot out a bird's perception of the Earth's field, causing the bird to fly in the wrong direction, and also disrupt a bird's internal clock based on the sun's changing position." See '5G to Kill the Birds, Bees and Your Loved Ones?'<sup>57</sup> and 'Western Insanity and 5G Electromagnetic Radiation.'<sup>58</sup>

Finally, without elaboration, vast numbers of birds are also killed each year by warfare and other military activities – see, for example, 'The impact of the 1991 Gulf War oil spill on bird populations in the northern Arabian Gulf – a review'<sup>59</sup> – by industrial activity and accidents – see, for example, 'Effects of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill on Birds: Comparisons of Pre- and Post-spill Surveys in Prince William Sound, Alaska'<sup>60</sup> – by road and air traffic, the spread of certain avian diseases to previously unaffected species – see 'Avian diseases are spreading to impact hitherto unaffected populations'<sup>61</sup> – wind turbines, cats, windows and communication towers, with 7 million birds losing their lives

each year in the United States alone to the "web-like traps of wire and metal" used for communication. See 'Communication Towers Are Death Traps for Threatened Bird Species.'<sup>62</sup> Other birds are now being killed in response to conflict generated between birds. See 'Climate Change Leading to Fatal Bird Conflicts.'<sup>63</sup> And, of course, 'domesticated' birds such as chickens and turkeys are farmed and consumed in prodigiously huge quantities, including for Christmas.

Sadly, too, millions of birds of many species are imprisoned in cages as 'pets' denied the freedom that all humans crave for themselves.

So, in essence, if you were a bird, here is a survival strategy that should work. Only live in a habitat that will not be impacted, in any way, by human beings and their activities. That is, don't live on Earth.

### **Saving the Birds**

Given the vast range of threats posed to birdlife by humans – see a straightforward summary of 'The greatest threats facing Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas today'<sup>64</sup> which doesn't mention all threats and those that are emerging – it is clearly going to take a monumental effort on many fronts to contain the killing of birds and avert the ongoing extinction of bird species on Earth.

And, unless you are naive enough to believe that elite-controlled governments or international organizations and processes are going to do something that is actually effective – see 'The Global Elite is Insane Revisited'<sup>65</sup> – then it is up to us to make the difference. Of course, we can do a few things that are specific to saving birds but the bulk of what must happen is really about saving the biosphere (which includes birds) generally. The biosphere is, after all, one deeply-interconnected living entity.

This is why, according to some biologists, laws that focus on the protection of rare species miss the big picture. Joel Cracraft, for example, argues that, "We're losing the battle because we're fighting over single endangered species." Species protection tends to focus on charismatic species – beautiful birds and mammals – and doesn't value rare ecosystems or collections of species. See 'New Study Doubles the World's Number of Bird Species By Redefining "Species".'<sup>66</sup> Nor does it value the biosphere as a whole.

Still, some superlative efforts have been made on behalf of birds. For example, you can read some inspirational success stories by BirdLife International: '10 vital

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bird habitats saved through conservation action.<sup>67</sup>

And for one man's initiative 120 years ago that is having an ongoing impact, see 'How one man changed a Christmas tradition forever – to save birds.'<sup>68</sup>

So you can, of course, support the efforts of Birdlife International and the local, national and other organizations like it. See 'Welcome to BirdLife's Globally Threatened Bird Forums'<sup>69</sup> and, for example, 'Stop Wildlife Trafficking.'<sup>70</sup>

Separately from initiatives that focus specifically on birds, if you wish to fight powerfully to save Earth's biosphere consider joining those participating in 'The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth'<sup>71</sup> which outlines a simple program to systematically reduce your consumption and increase your local self-reliance over a period of years. Among many other beneficial environmental outcomes, this will reduce the ongoing destruction of bird habitat to produce the products we all consume.

But given the fear-driven violent parenting and education models that drive all violence in our world and which, among a multitude of other adverse outcomes, generates the addiction of most people in industrialized countries to the over-consumption that is destroying Earth's biosphere – see 'Love Denied: The Psychology of Materialism, Violence and War'<sup>72</sup> – then consider addressing this directly starting with yourself – see 'Putting Feelings First'<sup>73</sup> – and by reviewing your relationship with children. See 'My Promise to Children'<sup>74</sup> and 'Nisteling: The Art of Deep Listening.'<sup>75</sup> For fuller explanations, see 'Why Violence?'<sup>76</sup> and 'Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice.'<sup>77</sup>

If you wish to campaign strategically to defend birds against particular threats, such as the climate catastrophe, military violence, or the deployment of 5G, for example, consider joining those campaigning to halt these and other threats as well. See Nonviolent Campaign Strategy<sup>78</sup> which already includes a comprehensive list of strategic goals necessary to achieve these outcomes in two key contexts in 'Strategic Aims.'<sup>79</sup>

But, whatever you do, don't fall into the trap of fearfully begging the elite (and its agents and their processes) to act on your behalf as, for example, the antiwar and climate movements are doing (with climate 'activists' marginalized at the latest COP25 gathering in Madrid). If we do not focus our efforts on engaging all people who are powerful enough to do so to respond strategically, then we will fail. And our fail-

ure will not only be the result of the elite refusing to take the requisite action despite your entreaties but also because the elite, as a group, is powerless to make sufficient difference: only a massive response from the wider population can produce the outcome we now need. For explanations of this, see 'Why Activists Fail', 'The Global Climate Movement is Failing: Why?'<sup>80</sup> and 'The War to End War 100 Years On: An Evaluation and Reorientation of our Resistance to War.'<sup>81</sup>

Moreover, in those cases where corrupt or even electorally unresponsive governments are leading the destruction of the biosphere – by supporting, sponsoring and/or engaging in environmentally destructive practices – it might be necessary to remove these governments as part of the effort. See Nonviolent Defense/Liberation Strategy.<sup>82</sup>

You might also consider joining the global network of people resisting violence in all contexts, including against the biosphere, by signing the online pledge of 'The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World.'<sup>83</sup>

Or, if none of the above options appeal or they seem too complicated, consider committing to:

## The Earth Pledge

Out of love for the Earth and all of its creatures, and my respect for their needs, from this day onwards I pledge that:

1. I will listen deeply to children (see explanation above).
2. I will not travel by plane.
3. I will not travel by car.
4. I will not eat meat and fish.
5. I will only eat organically/biodynamically grown food.
6. I will minimize the amount of fresh water I use, including by minimizing my ownership and use of electronic devices.
7. I will not buy rainforest timber.
8. I will not buy or use single-use plastic, such as bags, bottles, containers, cups and straws.
9. I will not use banks, superannuation (pension) funds or insurance companies that provide any service to corporations involved in fossil fuels, nuclear power, and/or weapons.
10. I will not accept employment from, or invest in, any organization that supports or participates in the exploitation of fellow human beings or profits from killing and/or destruction of the biosphere.
11. I will not get news from the corporate media (mainstream newspapers, tele-

vision, radio, Google, Facebook, Twitter...).

12. I will make the effort to learn a skill, such as food gardening or sewing, that makes me more self-reliant.

13. I will gently encourage my family and friends to consider signing this pledge.

Do all these options sound unpalatable? Prefer something requiring less commitment? You can, if you like, do as most sources suggest: nothing (or its many tokenistic equivalents). I admit that the options I offer are for those powerful enough to comprehend and act on the truth. Why? Because there is so little time left and I have no interest in deceiving people or treating them as unintelligent and powerless. See 'Human Extinction by 2026? A Last Ditch Strategy to Fight for Human Survival'<sup>84</sup> and 'Doomsday by 2021.'<sup>85</sup>

## Conclusion

Birds are being killed with ruthless efficiency by human beings and their activities all over the world. Obviously, this is an unmitigated tragedy for Earth's birds, the biosphere as a whole, and those humans who love life generally. But what are the practical implications of this ongoing bird killing for us?

Well, just as the death of one canary in a coal mine warned miners about their dangerous environment, the mass death of birds is yet another warning that we are destroying the planetary biosphere.

However, in this case, we are not treating the canary's death as a warning and, even if we were, it does not mean that we can escape because there is nowhere else to go.

In short, if we don't save the birds, we won't save ourselves.

**Robert J. Burrowes has a lifetime commitment to understanding and ending human violence. He has done extensive research since 1966 in an effort to understand why human beings are violent and has been a nonviolent activist since 1981. He is the author of 'Why Violence?' His email address is flame-tree@riseup.net and his website is at <http://robertjburrowes.wordpress.com>**

**Pressenza is an international news agency dedicated to news about peace and nonviolence with offices in Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Bordeaux, Brussels, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Florence, Lima, London, Madrid, Manila, Mar del Plata, Milan, Montreal, Munich, New York, Paris, Porto, Quito, Rome, Santiago, Sao Paulo, Turin, Valencia, and Vienna.**

**Source and easy access to Footnotes as seen on the next two pages:** <https://www.pressenza.com/2019/12/our-vanishing-world-birds/>



## Birds *continued from previous page*

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# Tribal Rainforest Academy

**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:** I am about to do something unusual. I met this amazing man on Facebook while I was trying to drum up new subscribers. I don't have a regular story, I have no photo credits or captions. I just love the fact that he is trying so hard to preserve an indigenous culture in the Philippines. Let the pictures tell the story. I found this on their website:

**History of the Tribal School**  
“The Tribal people need for education had been started when their ancestral lands were included in the mining and logging concessions. The miners and loggers approached the Tribal Leaders to sign the documents without knowing and understanding the content of the papers because they did not know how to read and

understand the English language. Such a deceitful deed of the outsiders had pushed away the indigenous peoples from their own lands.

“The struggle of the tribes to fight back was nothing, because the miners were fully-armed. They cannot go to the city because they cannot read and understand

**School** *continued on next page*

**Birds** *continued from previous page*  
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**School** *continued from previous page*

the educated people. The Tribal elders were longing for education to have Hilltop Tribal School to educate all the community to defend their identity and ancestral lands.

“Tribes and Natures Defenders Inc. an indigenous-peoples-led Non Government Organization had helped the tribal community to build the temporary school for them to educate the 178 children. Temporary Tribal school had been built while waiting for the Donors to contribute the valuable education project. The organization had been searching for funds to build the Permanent Hilltop Tribal School.”

est is victory of all the indigenous peoples who were deprived and neglected by the government. The purpose of this school is to educate the tribes so that they can defend their lands, beliefs from religious assimilation, assert their rights to self determination, promote their tribal identity, exercise their tribal governance, protect their cultural heritage and gain knowledge for the sustainable economic development.

“For this, no one can stand at the community of the tribal village, unless their intention is good for the friendship and benefits of the tribes and environment.

The author needs donations to pay

teachers so here is that information.

Yes, I want to make a difference to the Forest Tribal Children!! I want to Sponsor the Hilltop Tribal School

30 dollars/month

40 dollars/month

I want to Sponsor the Tribal School Teachers for the School Sustainability

30 dollars/month for 1 teacher

50 dollars/month for 2 teachers

**Donate:** <https://tribaleducation.webs.com/donate-now>

**Source:** <https://tribaleducation.webs.com/about-the-school>

**School** *continued on next page*

**Before-Temporary Tribal School**

“After five months, the organization had sourced out funds from the Donor Partner to support the construction of the permanent Hilltop Tribal School. Permanent Tribal School is very important to continue their journey of education for the benefits of all the communities.

The Hilltop Tribal School is situated at Mount Sagyaan Forest where the Higa-onon indigenous peoples are found. Education is the cure of the decades-old problems of ancestral land grabbing. It was very sad that only at this point to rescue the tribes and the half of their lands were taken away from them and their rights were abused.

The presence of the Hilltop Tribal School in the for-



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Photo on left by Abraham, photo on right by Henry  
(left) Willingston, Naftaly, and Henry are k5 project children delighting in the pumpkin patch. (right) Abraham is holding a delicious, nutritious pumpkin.

# Benefits of Pumpkin Farming in Uganda

By Omito Abraham Owuor, Uganda

So happy to hold our first pumpkins together with the young farmers Henry, Naftaly Abraham, and Whillingston. The plant has 43 pumpkins we are happy with the results of production. The health benefits of the pumpkins are:

- Highly Nutritious and Particularly Rich in Vitamin A High Antioxidant Content;

- May Reduce Your Risk of Chronic Diseases;
- Packs Vitamins That May Boost Immunity...Vitamin A, Lutein and Zeaxanthin ;
- May Protect Your Eyesight Nutrient Density; and
- Low Calorie Count May Promote Weight Loss.

Our vision is to introduce pumpkins farming to help in food security in Kenyan

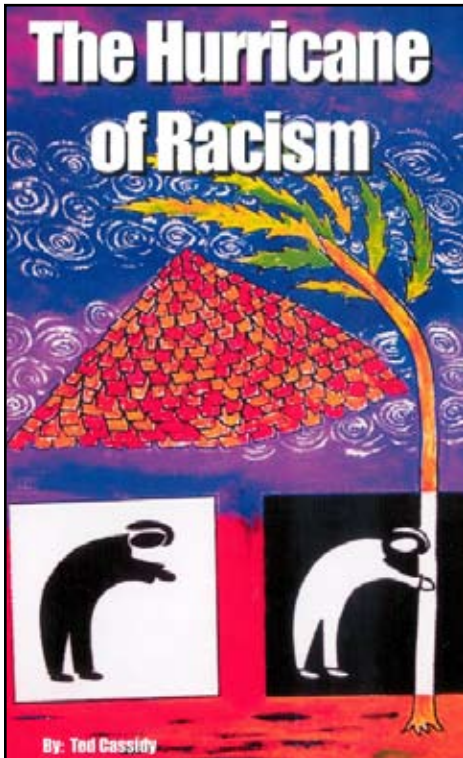
remote areas to have food and income generation. Kindly join us with any help. Pack bags are much needed for packing seeds and fruits for safe storage. This will help keep them for next planting and distribution to other people in need. Kindly let me know of anybody who is willing to help.

Contact Omito Abraham:

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# The Nature of Racism and How We Conquer It



By Fr. Ted Cassidy, SM, Ohio USA

**Note from the Editor:** *Ted is an old friend who wrote this book in 2006 and gave me a copy. Racism is such a pervasive and horrible problem that I'm going to run his book as a series.*

## Introduction

Welcome to this guide for conquering racism. I commend you for picking it up. Read through its pages, and you will find a definition of racism and a technique of how you and others you are involved with can do something to change it.

Racism is a dysfunctional social system that has been constructed by human powers in society. Just as a family, a business, a school, or any institution can lose its cohesive way of functioning so too a society can lose its manner of operating so that each member gives and receives in a fair and respectful way.

Racism is a social system in which the power of one race dominates others. The way this power is used can be obvious. It can also be hidden in economic, political, religious, cultural or other manipulations.

As you read through this manual you will be challenged to examine your own loyalties. Perhaps you may need to examine what you have thought were authentic values and causes worth giving your energy and support.

I am a Catholic priest and a member of a reli-

gious order called the Marianists. I have been a teacher in Catholic high schools, a parish priest, a director of religious formation for those entering the Marianists, and a chaplain in a retreat house. I certainly believe in the importance of faith and the presence of God's help. However, this book is not written from a faith perspective. Racism is a public, societal reality that can infect people of any faith. Just as people in a society can share the same sicknesses and the need for medical assistance, those who suffer from the contagion of racism need remedies to cure it.

As the reader of this book will recognize, a major object of concern is the use of systemic power by the white race in America. During a workshop analyzing the nature of racism a participant remarked, "It is a question of power and understanding the power in a system." In the example of a dysfunctional family later described in this book, a mother was holding onto misguided and dominating power. To bring correction and justice to the family system, the father had to use his power to correct the family's dysfunction. Being both afraid and oblivious, the father let the mother keep her power and control to the detriment of the family. If he were to upset the dysfunctional power system, the mother and other members of the family would fight back desiring to hold onto their accustomed power. If he were to exert his proper role and use his influence correctly, he could be an instrument that brings the family greater health. This book is an effort to help the reader become such a leader in the dysfunctional system of racism.

Racism as a social system is comparable to a hurricane, a system of tremendous ferocity. Human beings have built this unjust social construct

of racism that infects our society. What makes it so powerful is the way that members of society and social groupings of all kinds are co-opted into the dysfunction. Indeed it is a tremendously powerful control system. However, it has been created by human beings and therefore can be dismantled by human beings.

This manual will examine principles that explain the nature and means of changing racism. These are:

- **Chapters 1 and 2:** Racism is a stable social system that strongly tends to stay in place.

- **Chapter 3:** When any key person or institution in a racist social system can control his/her emotional reactions, accurately observe the functioning of the racist system, avoid counter-attacking when provoked and maintain an active relationship with other key members without withdrawing or becoming silent, the entire system will change.

- **Chapter 4:** Racism is built on triangulating. Triangulating, the basic building block in emotional systems, is the process in which individuals or institutions emotionally pull in support for their emotional comfort in opposition to a third party – Chapter 4.

- **Chapter 5:** The member of the minority in a racist system easily becomes the "identified patient," the one in whom the system's pathology surfaces.

*The Hurricane of Racism* is available for free online at <https://www.nacms.org/epubs/special-articles/hurricane-racism> or a hard copy of the book can be purchased via Amazon @ <https://www.amazon.com/Hurricane-Racism-Ted-Cassidy/dp/0962830976>

**Racism is a Dysfunctional Social System**

- *A power system where certain elements dominate other elements*
- *"Like a hurricane" -- a system of tremendous power which one has to observe like a weather forecaster*
- *In the USA, the White race is in the dominant position and People of Color are considered the "Problem People"*



Photo: <https://www.grandmagazine.com/2019/09/2019-grandparent-of-the-year>

Meet Valerie Wood-Geiger of Wales, 2019 GRANDparent of the Year.

## GRANDparent of the Year Creates International NGO

Dear Iona,

First of all I wish you a Happy Christmas! There will of course be sad moments and a lot of upheaval moving house and starting a new life will be difficult. I was in a similar position 20 years ago. Remember the ancient Persian mantra, "This too will pass." It's hard to believe when you are in the middle of such great change but this period will become history!

I would not have believed how much has happened to me during the last 20 years; in many ways they have been the most amazing years! Unexpectedly interesting; inspiring; rewarding and – yes – happy!!

An article in the September 2, 2019 issue of *GRAND (Living the Ageless Life)* magazine by Christine Crosby will tell you more about me & Learn with Grandma. <https://www.grandmagazine.com/2019/09/2019-grandparent-of-the-year/>

I'm totally thrilled and amazed to have been chosen as their GRANDparent 2019. The FIRST non-American to have been

chosen – ever!

I was amazed to have been chosen! I'm 78; live in a tiny village in the Welsh hills in the middle of nowhere. I started Learn with Grandma (LwG) as my retirement project; just floated my ideas of Intergenerational Learning & Active Aging on Facebook never expecting that people in 51 countries around the world would start a group for their country. I don't know why God gave me the idea that we can USE the Internet to reunite Generations. I think He should have given the idea to someone like Bill Gates – not to an OAP living in the middle of nowhere (Wales)!

It all happened so fast. I started sharing ideas in the autumn of 2014 and now good projects are happening in so many countries – it inspires me to keep on sharing the message that doing stuff together is fun. We elders can learn a lot from our young people - especially about all this digital stuff! We elders also have so much knowledge to share. We are not a problem

– we are a RESOURCE!

Using FB as a tool we can all share ideas and now that there are so many LwG groups I really do NEED help! And a little way that you could help me (if you would like to) would be for you to share articles directly to the relevant groups (list below), if no group for that country, share to the International group.

God Bless & Happy Christmas/Nadolig Llawen

Val  
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+44(0) 1550 721884 07484 2263390  
Please note no mobile signal in Myddfai.  
Do NOT leave a message on the mobile!  
Better to leave one on Facebook!

Founder of Learn with Grandma - currently with 51 international Groups on Facebook.

**GRANDparent** continued on next page

**GRANDparent** *continued from previous page*

Learn with Grandma is a not-for-profit NGO registered in Wales reg no. 8259039.

Patron of [www.kawauganda.org](http://www.kawauganda.org) Uganda, Patron Repair Cafe Wales

All suggestions are Achievable; Affordable and Sustainable!

Shared to Learn with Grandma International <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1489818234620407/?fref=ts>

*Learn with Grandma is now an international network with - currently - 51 Facebook groups around the world promoting Intergenerational Learning & Active Ageing. The main aim is to share ideas of how to use the Internet as a bridge to reunite the generations and help break down the digital age gap by sharing skills, love, and knowledge across the generations. Good projects are happening in many countries. All suggestions are achievable, affordable, and sustainable!*

**Albania:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1814597608782743/> .

**Austria:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1491274227825632/?fref=ts>

**Australia:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1505276623054477/>

**Bulgaria:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/biz/Learn-with-Grandma-Bulgaria-1886633004985723/>

**Burkina Faso:** <https://web.facebook.com/groups/633019730451987/?source=unknwn>

**Burundi:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1859335294344185/>

**Cameroon:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/335769080549160/>

**Canada:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/995504223843628/>

**DR Congo:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/250925435055011/?fref=ts>

**Egypt:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/233752196833025/?fref=ts>

**Ethiopia:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1610792729202354/?fref=ts>

**Francais:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lwgcanafrancais/> a group for French speakers everywhere, the Meet Valerie Wood-Geiger, 2019 GRANDparent of the Year

**Gambia:** [https://www.facebook.com/groups/learnwithgrandmagambia/?ref=group\\_cover](https://www.facebook.com/groups/learnwithgrandmagambia/?ref=group_cover)

**Germany:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1499009597034723/?fref=ts>

**Gdansk:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LwG.Gdansk/?fref=ts>

**Ghana:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/443321415841542/?pnref=story>,

**Greece:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/734082246624996/?fref=ts>

**India:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1485158175039958/?fref=ts>

**Japan:** <https://www.facebook.com/>



**Photo: Courtesy Learn with Grandma**

*Valerie wrote: "I love my Ugandan dress which was a gift from the Headmistress of Trinity College Nabbingo. This beautiful school was my 'home' for two months in 2014. I lived with the nuns and needed their help with the sash. It was so funny because they don't wear these dresses either."*

**Kenya:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2437350309837326/permalink/243735033170657/>

**Latvia:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/145049148919721/?fref=ts>

**Liberia:** Put Learn with Grandma Liberia in the search box.

**Madagascar:** [https://free.facebook.com/groups/359933371044033?refid=27&ref=opera\\_speed\\_dial](https://free.facebook.com/groups/359933371044033?refid=27&ref=opera_speed_dial)

**Malawi:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/547672425370949/>

**Mexico:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1858767904449898/>

**Moldova:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/950884011978683/>

**Nigeria:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/309610442568296/?fref=ts>

**Nepal:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/361945747297109/?fref=ts>

**Pakistan:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LearnWithGrandmaPakistan/>

**Philippines:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1769688246682735/>

**Poland:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/397417027477225/>

**Polska:** A group for Polish speakers everywhere.

**Romania:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/207940226063593/?fref=ts>

**Rwanda:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1954456804871341/>

**Senegal:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LWGSN/?fref=ts>

**Sierra Leone:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1578419992390877/?fref=ts>

**Slovakia:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/slovakialearnwithgrandma/?fref=ts>

**Slovenia:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/293673404876153/>

**Somalia:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1733178640247864/>

**South Africa:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1635117556814702>

**Spain:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/157915720964251/?fref=ts> a group for Spanish speakers wherever they live.

**Sudan:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1388738877819805/>

**Tanzania:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/grandmatanzania/?fref=ts>

**Turkey:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/215203411924747/?fref=ts>

**UAE:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/755719414550188/>

**Uganda:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/344240262301355/>

**UK:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LWG.Support/>

**Ukraine:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/162488977116736/?fref=ts>

**USA:** [https://www.facebook.com/groups/LearnwithGrandmaUSA/?source\\_id=57056163746](https://www.facebook.com/groups/LearnwithGrandmaUSA/?source_id=57056163746)

**Wales:** [https://m.facebook.com/groups/110882709011507/?ref=group\\_header&view=group](https://m.facebook.com/groups/110882709011507/?ref=group_header&view=group)

**Zambia:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/528534567250010/>

## the brief guide

less TV, more reading  
less shopping, more outdoors  
less clutter, more space  
less rush, more slowness  
less consuming, more creating  
less junk, more real food  
less busywork, more impact  
less driving, more walking  
less noise, more solitude  
less focus on the future, more  
on the present  
less work, more play  
less worry, more smiles  
breathe

Submitted by Linda L., Idaho USA



Does Your Car Look Like  
a Mini-Landfill? Get  
a Hand-Made Trash Bag  
from a Small  
Cooperative Using  
Salvaged Fabrics

These bags are made in Frederick, Maryland by Green Earth Goods. They won't be from fancy fabric like those pictured. They will be a little bigger. They cost \$5 with free shipping in the U.S.

We need to find a way to withhold our taxes in protest of our taxes being used to support war. Our Number One export is war and war materials. Thank of All the money we would save by not supporting this Military Complex. There will be a lot of companies going out of business. All the war material manufacturers. They could be replaced by Environmentally based businesses like, "GREEN EARTH GOODS." It is imperative that We, All of us, put Our collective survival FIRST. Make no mistake, if we don't do this, everything will be lost.

Green Earth Goods is a cooperative that salvages scrap fabric from cutting room floors. These car trash bags are made from scraps and each one will be different. They cost \$5.00 each and includes shipping. Order at [greeneearthgoods9534@gmail.com](mailto:greeneearthgoods9534@gmail.com).

**I BELIEVE PEACEMAKING DOESN'T MEAN PASSIVITY. IT IS THE ACT OF INTERRUPTING INJUSTICE WITHOUT MIRRORING INJUSTICE, THE ACT OF DISARMING EVIL WITHOUT DESTROYING THE EVILDOER, THE ACT OF FINDING A THIRD WAY THAT IS NETIER FIGHT NOR FLIGHT BUT THE CAREFUL, ARDUOUS PURSUIT OF RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE. IT IS ABOUT A REVOLUTION OF LOVE THAT IS BIG ENOUGH TO SET BOTH THE OPPRESSED AND THE OPPRESSORS FREE.**

- Shane Claiborne -

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/12689683>

Submitted by Linda L., Idaho USA

RATHER THAN RELYING ON A THIN, IDEALIZED HOPE THAT WE WILL ALL ONE DAY JUST GET ALONG, WE CAN APPROACH CONFLICT RESOLUTION AS AN ART FORM THAT WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO DEVELOP AND HONE.

- Diane Musho Hamilton -

[https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/6983887.Diane\\_Musho\\_Hamilton](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/6983887.Diane_Musho_Hamilton)

# Consumer Liberation

Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

*Email Iona at [groundswellnews@pa.net](mailto:groundswellnews@pa.net) and she will put you on our email list to receive monthly issues of our climate activist journal. "Every new one makes us stronger," sings Pete Seeger.*



## Groundswell News

An activist publication bringing readers struggles and successes as well as climate-change news in the U.S. and around the globe. People everywhere are working to make change. Our beautiful journal will inspire and encourage you. Learn more at [www.gobackclub.org](http://www.gobackclub.org). Email [groundswellnews@pa.net](mailto:groundswellnews@pa.net) to be put on our e-list.. It's free but donations are gladly accepted. A project of the 501(c)(3) Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice. Photo <https://www.google.com/search>

## Groundswell News Now Accepting Ads

Please consider placing your ad with us. As we are an alternative source of news, we have an alternative ad policy. Send me your material and pay what you feel is reasonable, depending on how much space your ad needs. If your ad requires some of my time to create it for you, there will be an extra charge. If you can afford \$50 for half a page and \$100 for a full page, that will be wonderful. Our distribution is small now but we hope to grow quickly and our readers are wonderfully supportive people!

*Thank you.*



*Remember your dreams.*



## Messages from Our Friends



Photo: Lars Aronsson

As we head for the whirlwind of the next few Days With Names, I've been thinking about the oddly amusing parts (tongue firmly implanted in cheek).

**Thanksgiving Day:** We'll meet, greet, and eat . . . and eat . . . and eat. The ample menus will fortify us for tomorrow, a strenuous day of . . . shopping!

**Black Friday:** Beat the December holiday rush with the Thanksgiving holiday rush! Line up with your sleeping bag at 12:01 a.m. at Big Box, Inc. to be the first in line to get the baddest bargain ever for something you never knew you needed until the targeted ad popped up in your browser (they know you better than you know yourself). But there's also an antidote, a Black Friday competitor on the very same day, nipping at its heels . . .

**BuyNothingDay:** By 11:59 p.m. you'll have given up, returned everything you just bought, and you'll marvel at the resilience of your bank account.

**Small Business Saturday®:** Started in 2010 in a flurry of compassion for struggling local merchants by grassroots hero American Express (which owns the trademark), small businesses across the country have benefited (for a slight fee) from the leftover crumbs courtesy of Black Friday.

**Silent Sunday:** I just made this one up,

but I marvel that commerce has so far overlooked 24 hours of opportunity. But maybe we humans actually do need a day of rest after all. . . .

**Cyber Monday:** Four hundred years after the first Thanksgiving, the world has changed. What may have been virtue is now virtual. We can pre-shop and pre-drop on the living room couch, laptops in laps, and shop to our heart's content only limited by the calories needed to mobilize our fingers (which we have in abundance after abundant dinners – calories, that is, not fingers). It's fortunate that we don't have to travel to buy on Cyber Monday, since the FedEx and Amazon trucks delivering our purchases are making traffic impassable.

**Green Monday:** Started by eBay in 2007, Green Monday is a reasonably remunerative if relatively poor cousin to Cyber Monday (apologies if you were misled into thinking that the "Green" referred to something growing other than corporate profits).

**Giving Tuesday:** Sigh of relief! A day of true gifts that keep on giving. From you, supporting non-profits around the globe whose work betters the lives of millions – even billions – of people. This is you at work, a bright light of Giving Tuesday, making it possible for organizations like Biodiversity for a Livable Climate to address dire problems, from saving children to saving life on planet Earth, and everything in between.

Giving thanks and just giving – out of love and respect for our brothers and sisters, of all species and walks of life, wanting nothing in return – but feeling part of a community of hope. The best feeling in the world!

**Adam Sachs**

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate  
Massachusetts USA

Bravo to you for putting this together amid your several transitions!

This is about the big fight in Ayr Township in Fulton County to keep out a 9,000-hog CAFO that a corporation is trying to put into pristine farmland, threatening air, water, and fishing streams of this lovely area.

Our big fight in Franklin County is with the corporation that wants to put a very high powered, 100-foot-high electric line through the heart of our county, and over one of our environmental treasures, the Falling Spring stream.

There are communities throughout Pennsylvania fighting corporate rule of one form or another. Now via ALEC proposed legislation they are trying to pass a ruling that says protesting pipelines (and such) would be criminal considered on the level of rape or murder. These are all democracy struggles. If you ever want to talk about this either email me back or we could arrange for a teleconference for those who are interested, and I would get some of the people leading these struggles on the call.  
**Alanna Hartzok**, Pennsylvania USA

You may not be familiar with a law that we have had here in Sweden for a very long time: "allemansrätten." It is a law that gives everyone ("allemän") the right to freely roam anywhere in nature without worrying about whether the path takes him or her across private property. You are, of course, not allowed to damage anything on that property, but you can sit down and have lunch if you want to (making sure you don't leave trash behind!), lie down and enjoy the sun and the sky, or admire the view and take photos, or whatever. Essentially, the whole country is like a national park. I have never heard anyone complain that the law is unfair to property owners, or that there has been a lot of damage done to their property.

I applaud your commitment to the struggle to stop global warming, which is the largest, most dangerous problem that humanity faces. It is one that humankind has caused, at least to a significant degree.

Most people in that movement are young, but if you are a friend of Jim Fenner's you might no longer be in your teens.

I am a bit moss-covered myself (just kidding) but I am still interested in many different issues. And just because we all face a global problem, we should not ignore the

**Messages** continued on next page



**Messages** continued from previous page

problems we face on a more local scale. They can locally also be very painful and unfair and worthy of our attention. Many have a long history and have, over time, caused enormous suffering and millions of lives lost.

Among those issues is the discrimination still suffered in America by persons of non-white "races," by females, and by persons of particular ethnicities, national origins, religions, or sexual orientations. The wounds and scars of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation have left the black population in widespread poverty, with inferior education and bad health. It is harrowed by crime, broken homes, substance addiction, and incarceration. Many blacks are affected psychologically by being viewed by many whites with suspicion, fear, and contempt, and by feeling strong fear and intimidation in encounters with police.

Violence is endemic in the nation. In every three-year period of the last 60 years, there were more fatalities caused by firearms in American homes and streets than the total number of American deaths in the 10 years of the war in Vietnam.

The entire political system and most of the news media are seriously corrupted by the power of big money.

The economic inequities in society are reaching extreme levels. The costs of healthcare and higher education are becoming astronomical, rising much faster than the minimal increase in income seen by the American worker since the 1970s. Medical bills are the number one cause of personal bankruptcies. Social mobility and opportunity for lower-income people are now seriously hindered by the cost of college. Meanwhile, the income and wealth of the richest 1% have reached shocking levels.

I lived for almost half a century in the United States, and I made many good friends there. But when it came time to retire, I decided to find a less stressful environment, where the problems existing in the United States barely, if at all, exist. So, I went back to "the old country," and settled back into my old hometown. Good for the soul! It is a society that may not be ideal, but it is one I can feel satisfied with. In international surveys, it ranks among the best, if not number one, in most areas. It is clean, safe, ecology-minded, fair, free, and democratic far beyond what America provides the average citizen today. Bernie Sanders is right: "Socialized" healthcare and higher education have been very good for the Scandinavian countries.

Best regards,  
**Anders Eklof**, Sweden

**Dearest Ms. Iona,**

My sincere apologies to you, my uni-

verse sister, that I didn't get to accompany by your side even via email during your tough time. I didn't use email as my friend nowadays sending me files via WhatsApp or Telegram. I'm sorry!

Once I logged in today, I read the email you had share with me, I feel sorry to hear the tough moment you have been experienced in year 2019. To me, you are a great wife, a great woman, Ms. Iona Conner. You have done your best!!

I knew that I can't help you physically, but I pray to universe, to heaven, to Mother Earth:

*I wish the wind can blow away Iona's frustration and bring her fresh breath,*

*I wish the sky can wide Iona's mind and bring her open thoughts,*

*I wish the sunlight can brighten Iona's heart and bring her warmth,*

*I wish the snow can calm Iona's emotion and bring her chill time,*

*I wish the tree can say hi to Iona and share her positive movement,*

*I wish the moon can comfort Iona and bring her peace mind,*

*I wish the hills can hug Iona and give her courage to live strongly,*

*I wish the smiles can cheer Iona up and the smile is on Iona's face.*

How's your everything there?

**Collin Yeoh**, Malaysia

My country again!!

Liberia is the oldest country in Africa, but in my country the government keeps showing the differences between children whose parents are fortunate to be rich and the children whose parents are unfortunate to meet the standard benchmarks of life.

Why in my country are students from public school in tears and brutalized by the state security without any justification?

You must stand up for your rights; quality education is a privilege granted to the students by the constitution, it affects the students when they are not getting any teacher to teach them due to the fact that teachers are said to not be paid by the government.

Since the government has failed to listen to the plights of the teachers, they decided not to go back to the class until their salaries and arrears are settled.

If some government officials' children were in public school, they couldn't allow what happened today to have happened to the common people's children.

After skyrocketing the fees of public school, then they have refused to pay the teachers in order to deny children market and poor masses children quality education.

We expect the students' leaders who should speak for everyone. But they only speak for themselves as most of them have



turned to self-seekers of glory.

Special call to Montserrado students Union to stop sleeping on the youthful generation and act to protect every student. When they hear "public school," they think and imagined it differently by saying let "those children wait small."

Only in Liberia are police quick to beat on common people's children. However, when a group of people beat on the Deputy police director for operation, no police reacted unless in the case of innocent kids.

If the police can beat on common people's children, why you did not beat on these people that beat on your boss, but you have guts to only beat on children.

It will be difficult for Liberia to be great if we still get the thinking that nothing good should go to public school students in this country.

Public school should be greater than any other school in this country but are the poorest schools in the country.

The government must respect the public schools and adequately supply them because we will not allow our future to go down.

Our student leaders from all other students' organizations should please act and stop receiving bags of Rice to Replace our future with bags of rice.

This is our Liberia again and I salute you all for fighting for your rights.

**Amb Moissalah Turay II**, Liberia

I am president of a non-profit association named Défi et Révolution de la Vie Rurale (DRVR-TOGO) in our country. Our goals are to promote social, health sector, agriculture sector, economic development, and education for poor and vulnerable communities, especially women and orphan children in our country.

**Akouete Simon**, Togo

We are working for the World generations.  
**Tesfahum Fitamo**, Ethiopia

**Messages** continued on next page

### Messages *continued from previous page*

Hello! I am Mutuku Mutielega (the name I use on Facebook). I saw you wrote on my Facebook timeline and am happy about your decision. Receive warm greetings from Kenya. I have a community based organization by the name Soil, Water & Environmental Conservation Foundation. I am the founder and executive Director of this foundation. We work with communities living in northern and eastern parts of Kenya doing water projects due to scarcity of water during the dry season. We do:

1. Water projects (shallow wells, boreholes, earth dams, rock catchments);
2. Environmental Conservation programs (afforestation programs and training communities about management of Environment);
3. Food security programs; and
4. Disaster risk reduction.

So, I would like to connect with you. Our website link [swecf-ke.blogspot.com](http://swecf-ke.blogspot.com)  
My whatsapp number is +254727897760.  
**Mutuku Mutielega**, Kenya (See page 7.)

Here in the Philippines, it's very sad that the remaining sacred forest are being destroyed by the capitalists tribal leaders. Tribal dealers sold 300 hectares (741 acres) to the outsiders. We are striving to find ways to save the remaining sacred forest for the next generation. I created a crowd funding to raise money to buy 50 hectares (124 acres) of sacred forest but it was not successful last year.

Miners and loggers destroyed our last haven, our culture, and nature will be soon to be destroyed. I tried to raise funds to save money in Mount Alik but it was not successful. Yes, my mission is to save the dying culture and nature. We are one family helping the tribes as forest best friends are the things to do.

We are here in the time of reconnecting the unseen spirits of the sacred forest as we see the sacredness of the creation. You cannot buy beauty and life in nature.

If people want to sponsor the Hilltop Tribal School and/or Tribal School Teachers for School Sustainability, they can donate at PayPal.

**Datu Kilala Lanelio Sangcoan**, Tribal Rainforest Academy, Philippines (p. 18-25)

Well, I have already read a fair proportion of your latest *Groundswell News* and it simply brings to mind what might be possible if the corporate media was to publish the material you publish!

You have such a wonderful capacity to bring news from a diverse range of sources that is relevant, informative (including sobering), and inspiring.

Which is what, in my opinion, a good editor should do but which so few seem to have the capacity for.

Anyway, my sincere thanks for your kindness in publishing my own article and for giving it a lovely 'plug' in your email too. It is beautifully presented.

I loved the turkey vulture drawing and, in "The Discovery that Overshadows..." the "pale blue dot" photo, too.

But plenty more besides. Hopefully, now, you can enjoy some quieter time in the leadup to Christmas. Although, from what I already know of you, that is unlikely!

In sincere appreciation Iona.  
**Robert Burrowes**, Australia

Thank you very much for having sent to me a very wonderful articles. The articles will help us to carry on stronger, longer, and more intelligently than ever. Thank you once again and we encourage you to keep on sending us more articles to share with our colleagues here in our village of Kyan-gasi in Central Kabuoch location. Thank you and be blessed through the good work done for the peoples around the world.  
**Lucy Achieng**, Kenya

Thanks for these amazing stories around the globe. I am actually inspired reading them. You really do have inspiring stories. Thanks for fighting for our planet and providing information that is needed for updates. Keep inspiring this generation with great information. Thanks for motivating me every moment.

I was invited to speak to group of young change maker. I was impressed speaking with them.

**Amb Hanson G. Blayon**, Liberia

We stand at the threshold of a new decade, and the future looks perilous. 2020 will be a pivotal year for the world, both politically and environmentally. There is, unfortunately, not much we can do about the political turmoil in India, Hong Kong, Lebanon, and other foreign nations, but climate change is a looming worldwide disaster where America is one of the locomotives pulling the world toward a tragic train wreck of absolutely historic proportions.

I believe we see the consequences of climate change in the extreme heat and huge fires in Australia at this time. Probably also in the extreme precipitation and flooding in India. Zimbabwe seems headed for catastrophic drought, threatening several million people with starvation and lack of drinkable water.

In America, Trump and his billionaire buddies in the coal and oil industries are the main culprits. Trump is a malevolent narcissist, a crude and ignorant bully with

the morals, manners, and mouth of a gangster boss. It is shameful how the Republican party and the conservative evangelical Christians continue to support him. He is a pathological liar who believes his own outlandish claims. "Climate change is a hoax dreamed up by the Chinese to hurt America," "Wind power turbines spew massive amounts of toxic gases into the atmosphere and kill lots of birds, especially bald eagles." It is glaringly obvious that Trump has violated numerous laws and articles of the Constitution, but equally obvious that he will escape conviction on the articles of impeachment in the Senate.

The American system of government does not function any longer, which I see as a consequence of the obsolete, wild-west frontier ethos of "individualism" and "self-reliance" that is still glorified as "the American Way." America needs a new "modus vivendi," a thorough reevaluation and adjustment of its values and socio-economic structures.

Everyone for himself and free competition worked a century or two ago when natural resources seemed inexhaustible and governmental powers were weak, but it is not a viable way of life in modern society. No wonder America ranks way down compared to other wealthy industrialized nations when it comes to democracy, freedom, and the rule of law, not to mention social and economic justice, equality, and generational socio-economic mobility. When the prevailing ethos of a nation is selfish individualism, democracy is in peril. When everyone votes according to emotional self-interest rather than rational concern for the common good, the result is too easily a dictatorship of the majority, producing a lot of political gridlock, anger, and frustration.

In that situation, the path is open for a megalomaniacal, charismatic bully to promote himself as a strongman with the unique talent and wisdom to break the logjams and steer the nation toward a great future. The political structure bends to permit the "great leader" more power to solve the nation's problems. The result is the classic dictatorship by the revered leader, a man seeing himself destined, perhaps heaven-sent, to be the savior of a nation in desperate chaos. He blames all problems on some evil conspiracy by those who oppose him and fans the flames of devotion in his supporters by stoking hatred of others, be they political opponents or religious or ethnic or national "enemies." Such a man can attract a fanatically devout following, unable to see (or willing to overlook) his flaws, foibles, and foolishness. (See Hitler.) With hope for a better New Year,  
**Anders Eklof**, Sweden