



Somaliland Biodiversity Foundation

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 2017

MUSEUM

New appointment: Faisal Jama Gelle was appointed, after an open competition, as the new museum assistant. He has a master's degree in Agricultural extension and excellent command of English. Immediately after his appointment, on his own initiative he enrolled in a Coursera course in Biodiversity taught by faculty at the University of Zurich. During 2017, he represented the Foundation at various meetings and, in collaboration with Ahmed Awale, helped contribute to information on the plants of the university's campus (see outreach).

Collection Growth: During 2017, 121 specimens were added to the Biodiversity Museum's herbarium. The information associated with them can be viewed in OpenHerbarium (<http://openHerbarium.org>).

Physical facilities: The museum's capabilities expanded with addition of a herbarium cabinet, (purchased locally), a long arm dissecting microscope, additional supplies for the herbarium, equipment for plant surveys, hand lenses, some entomological supplies, and books. The additions provide the museum with adequate hand lenses and survey equipment for plant-oriented workshops of 15 participants.

Fieldwork

A short field trip to Gacan Libaax was conducted in May. There were 7 participants: Awale and Barkworth from the foundation, Garrett Billings, a US range graduate with experience in conducting plant surveys, and Helen Pickering, an associate of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, with extensive experience in tropical floras, and three students. The trip had two goals: adding to the number of species known to be in area and introducing the participating students to the preparation of well-documented plant specimens and the conduct of plant surveys. Fifteen specimens were identified to species and added to the collection. Another 20 were collected but have not yet been identified. The trip also provided insight how to make such experiences more productive both scientifically and educationally.

Pickering returned to Somaliland in September to photograph wild plants, the ultimate objective being publication of a book on the plants of Somaliland similar to her earlier publication on the wild plants of Oman. She was assisted by one of the students from the Gacan Libaax field trip. They made several collections, some with duplicates that Pickering took back

with her to Kew for identification. She noted that the SPU who accompanied the field trip also proved to be very helpful.

In addition to welcome financial support, Pickering's interest in using photography to share knowledge of plants with others has been of immense help to the herbarium section of the museum and benefitted all of us who have worked with her. She has persuaded many of the individuals at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to identify voucher specimens she has collected. This has led to addition of about five species to those known from Somaliland. Her keen eye has also led to realization that there are three species of cacti in Hargeisa, none of which belong to *Opuntia monacantha*, the only species of cactus included in *Flora of Somalia* based on specimens from southern Somalia. No records of cacti from Somaliland were in the *Flora* because there were no specimens known from the country.

Workshop

A workshop on plant identification (Barkworth) and plant surveys (Billings) was held at the University of Hargeisa in May. There were 18 participants from the University of Hargeisa, the Ministry of Environment, Environmentalists and Agriculturalists as well as some students from the Departments of Environment and Agriculture of the University of Hargeisa. Much was learned, primarily by Barkworth. Future workshops will be less ambitious in scope, have participants that are more similar in their background, and include more handouts.

Outreach

Two issues of the newsletter were published, one in late May, the other in December. The initial translation of the December newsletter was completed by Faisal Jama; his translation was then reviewed and edited by Ahmed Awale before being posted.

Facebook has also been used to connect with people. Most of the posts have either been a sharing of those posted by Tomas Mazuch to his Nature of the Horn of Africa site or articles of general biodiversity interest. Facebook does get attention. The web site could and should be modified regularly but it is easier to post information to FaceBook.

Participation in Workshops and Meetings

June 24 -28: Barkworth gave a presentation on activities of the Somaliland Biodiversity Foundation to attendees at the annual meeting of the Botanical Society of America. SBF also had a table at the exhibit hall of the meeting where people came up and asked questions about the Foundation's goals.

July 15-17: Gelle represented the Foundation at a workshop on Somaliland Strategy Development for Disaster Risk Management organized by the Ministry of Environment and Rural Development with the support of the World Bank.

Aug. 1: Awale participated in a workshop on options for biodiversity and environmental conservation sponsored by GIZ. Its goal was to prepare a land use plan for the Upper Biji Water Catchment area.

Aug. 11: Gelle assisted the communications directorate of the University of Hargeisa in organizing a public lecture by zoologists from Charles University, Czech Republic.

Sep 9-11: Awale participated in a Strategic Planning and Development Workshop for a proposed Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehabilitation Center” hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Rural Development.

12 Dec: Gelle participated in a validation workshop about “The impact and alternative use of *Prosopis* in the study site of South-west Hargeisa”.

14-Dec: Gelle participated in a launching workshop for drought report organized by IPCS and Rift valley forum for research, policy and local knowledge.

Barkworth gave three other presentations on the foundation’s work during 2017, one to members of the Biology Department of Utah State University, and two to different chapters of the Boys and Girls Club of northern Utah. The Biology Department presentation generated several questions, offers of assistance in providing knowledge and helping make connections with specialists.

The Boys and Girls Clubs sponsors after school activities for students. Most of the students have parents who are working when school is out in the afternoon. The purpose in inviting Barkworth to give a presentation was to increase the students’ awareness of other parts of the world. The Brigham City chapter subsequently raised \$22 for the Foundation. The Logan Chapter planned to raise money by selling seeds in the spring.

Web sites

Descriptions and images of species known from Somaliland were posted to OpenHerbarium (<http://openherbarium.org>) and OpenZooMuseum (<http://openherbarium.org/zoo/portal/index.php>) but no record was kept of how many were added. In addition, keys from the *Flora of Somalia* were posted to KeyBase (<http://keybase.rbv.gov.au/projects/show/32>), again with appropriate acknowledgement of the source. They are slightly modified from those in the *Flora*, usually to make them easier to understand. A few modifications are more substantial because of the need to reflect current taxonomic concepts. For example, the key to genera of the *Fabaceae*, has been modified to allow identification of *Vachellia*, *Senegalia*, *Faidherbia*, and *Acacia* as separate genera. The keys are being linked to descriptive pages generated by OpenHerbarium as descriptions and images are added.

The additions to OpenZooMuseum came, with permission, from Tomas Mazuch’s Facebook postings. Descriptions of some of the animal species were added based on accounts in Wikipedia. All additions to the sites carry appropriate acknowledgement of their source.

ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

In the summer of 2017, the SBF Board voted to include a representative of the University of Hargeisa as a board member. President Dr. Mohamoud Yusuf Muse appointed Warsame Mohamud Ahmed, Director of Research and Community Development, as the university’s representative.

Barkworth added some names to the “Newsletter” membership category. People in this category receive an automated email when a newsletter has been published. There is no cost

involved. In future, people will simply be added to the Foundation's mailing list. This will be simpler and achieve the same goal, wider distribution of the Newsletter.

During 2017, the Foundation benefited from participation by Helen Pickering. In addition to welcome financial support and supporting her own travel, her interest in using photography to learn about and share knowledge of plants with others has been of immense help to the herbarium section of the museum and benefitted all of us who have worked with her. She has persuaded many of the individuals at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to identify voucher specimens she has collected. This has led to addition of about five species to those known from Somaliland. Her keen eye has also led to realization that there are three species of cacti in Hargeisa, none of which belong to *Opuntia monacantha*, the only species of cactus included in *Flora of Somalia* on the basis of specimens from southern Somalia. No cacti were reported from Somaliland.

FINANCES

The financial report is presented separately. Examination of the transaction report for 2017 shows rather a high proportion of the Foundation's income being devoted to software designed to help in developing and managing non-profit organizations but little use has been made of the tools included in the software. The problem is 1) not having an agreed upon clear, fund-raising goal to use in developing an appeal and 2) not having the time required to make good use of the capabilities created by the software.

There were two major donors in 2017. Other sources of income were Zazzle, AmazonSmile, and the Boys and Girls Club of northern Utah. Zazzle is an online site through which Sandy Long sells products she designs. She has designed several that feature the SBF logo and has assigned profits from their sale to the Foundation.

The Foundation's major financial commitments during 2017 were for salary support to the museum assistant and Stephen Johnson. The commitment to Stephen was \$300 per month for work in locating possible funding sources and assistance in writing proposals. During the first part of the year, he was also paid through the Foundation by Anjanette DeCarlo for work relating to her frankincense research. Johnson helped identify some potential funding sources and drafted some proposals but the kind of funding involved was not consistent with the Foundation's goals, being focussed more on providing information to international bodies on individual species rather than building capacity in Somaliland. He also uncovered some of the challenges that the Foundation will encounter in fund-raising through grants. This arrangement ended in August through mutual agreement.