

LESOTHO AFRICA'S MOUNTAIN KINGDOM

Sometimes called "The Kingdom in the Sky" because of its high mountain country, Lesotho is a place of great scenic beauty, abundant water and winter snow. As a totally land-locked monarchy comprising about 30,000 km² and totally surrounded by South Africa, Lesotho is characterised by its distinct Basotho culture, relatively undeveloped regions and unique Afro-Alpine ecosystems.

Because of its high rainfall and elevated catchment, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project has been developed to transfer water to the industrial heartland of Gauteng in South Africa. Phase 1 of this massive engineering feat has now been completed. It has resulted in a network of new tarred roads as well as gravel feeder roads around the two main reservoirs, Katse Dam and Mohale Dam.

The income from water sales is making a major contribution to the economy of Lesotho. The transfer of water through underground tunnels has made it possible to drive a 72 MW hydropower station, which is currently producing all of Lesotho's electricity requirements, thus making it one of the "cleanest and greenest countries" in the world.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project has also resulted in the establishment of several new protected areas.

THE LESOTHO BIODIVERSITY TRUST

The Lesotho Biodiversity Trust was launched in December 2004 with a founding donation of eight million Maloti from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

This is a bilateral Trust, with three Trustees each from the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa.



Spiral Aloe



Bearded Vulture

OBJECTIVES OF THE LESOTHO BIODIVERSITY TRUST

To make whatever interventions that are necessary, and take whatever actions that are appropriate, to ensuring the continued survival of naturally occurring populations of Maloti Minnow (*Pseudobarbus quathlambae*) in Lesotho.

Undertake projects and make interventions to prevent the extinction of other endangered species of wild animals and plants in Lesotho, based on sound scientific principles.

Ensure the long-term financial viability of the Trust through the acquisition of funds by donors, bilateral aid agencies, or any other appropriate sources.

Provide funding for skills training in biodiversity science and conservation for citizens of Lesotho.

Develop materials, publications or any other means to promote the conservation of biodiversity among all citizens, and especially the Youth of Lesotho.

Assist and support the Government of Lesotho in meeting its obligations in terms of the international Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as other conventions and protocols related to biodiversity matters.

CONSERVING THE MALOTI MINNOW – THE CHALLENGE

The Lesotho Biodiversity Trust's flagship project is the conservation of the Maloti Minnow, a tiny fish found only in Lesotho, and now listed as "Critically Endangered" by the IUCN, the World Conservation Union.

The Maloti Minnow lost some 90% of its original population in Lesotho as a result of the introduction of trout for recreation fishing during colonial days. The construction of Phase 1B of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project has placed further pressure on the last remaining populations, as the Mohale Dam can now act as a source of alien predatory fish such as trout.

A great deal of money has been spent on a major research project on the Maloti Minnow, as a result of which we now know a great deal about its distribution, population structure and genetics. Experiments have been conducted to transplant minnows into new sanctuary areas.

This is the Trust's first major project, and we will be actively raising funds from individuals, companies, trusts and foundations worldwide, to assist us in this most challenging conservation programme.



Maloti Minnow

SUPPORT THE LESOTHO BIODIVERSITY TRUST

Lesotho is one of the World's "Least Developed Countries", and the kingdom faces great challenges in combating poverty and unemployment. Under these circumstances, it is difficult for the government to give adequate attention to the conservation of biodiversity, but Lesotho is setting an example to other poor countries in this respect.

Lesotho is a Party to both the international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

One of the objectives of the Lesotho Biodiversity Trust is to assist the Government of Lesotho in meeting its commitments to these conventions.

We need YOUR support for our work in Lesotho. Please write, phone, fax or e-mail us for further information. Look for regular updates on our web site!

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Mountains of Lesotho