

JOURNAL FRANZ WEBER

2019 Edition

HANDS OFF IVORY!

NOZEANIUM!

A victory for
the oceans

6

FRANZ WEBER

A tribute to the great
defender of nature
and animals

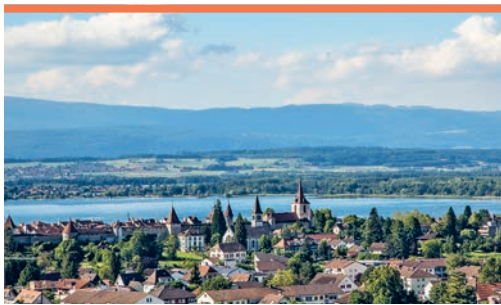
37



ffw.ch



–
The city of Barcelona will adopt the ZOOXXI concept. A citizen's initiative submitted by Fondation Franz Weber and the animal protection association Libera led to an amendment of the law by the city council of Barcelona on 3 May 2019, marking the end of the current zoo model in Barcelona. Page 14



–
The old town of Murten/Morat, in the Canton of Fribourg in Switzerland, is one of the jewels of our Swiss cultural heritage. However, a construction project to build nine apartment buildings within close proximity to the famous old town has been submitted. These dreadful residential rental buildings would inevitably degrade the town's character. Page 35



–
Franz Weber, the brilliant rebel – the great lion –, who fought to preserve nature and animals, passed away on 2 April 2019. Three close companions and fellow campaigners pay tribute to this extraordinary man. Page 37

CONTENTS

Editorial	3
In Brief	4 – 5
No to the Ozeanium – A victory for marine animals	6 – 13
ZOOXXI – The first foundation stone has been laid in Barcelona!	14 – 16
The massacre of African elephants – Aided and abetted by Europe	18 – 25
African Elephants – CITES must be held accountable	26 – 28
CITES – The aquarium industry in the crosshairs	29 – 30
What is a fighting bull?	31 – 32
Swiss volunteers at Equidad!	33 – 34
Fleur de Morat – The story of an impending environmental disaster	35 – 36
We pay tribute to Franz Weber	37 – 47

IMPRINT

PUBLISHED BY FONDATION FRANZ WEBER

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF: Vera Weber and Matthias Mast

EDITORS: Adam Cruise, Julia Fischer, Rebekka Gammenthaler

CONCEPT: KARGO Kommunikation GMBH

PAGE LAYOUT: Gianpaolo Burlon

PRINTED BY: Bruhin Spühler AG

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Journal Franz Weber, Abo, BP 257, 3000 Berne 13, Switzerland

Tel.: +41 (0)21 964 24 24 | E-Mail: ffw@ffw.ch | www.ffw.ch | [f](#) | [i](#)

All rights reserved. The Reproduction of photos, texts, or illustrations is not permitted without the express permission of the editorial staff.

No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

printed in
switzerland



BANK DETAILS FOR YOUR DONATIONS:

Postal account: 18-6117-3, Fondation Franz Weber, 3000 Bern 13, Switzerland
IBAN: CH31 0900 0000 1800 6117 3

EDITORIAL



VERA WEBER

President Fondation Franz Weber

Dear readers,

2019 has been a strange year. To quote Goethe, we have rejoiced in high heaven and plumbed the depths of despair. My father, Franz Weber, left us on 2 April 2019. His passing leaves behind a deep sadness over the loss of a beloved, wonderful person, but also a tremendous legacy for the protection of animals, nature, landscapes and cultural assets. You can read our tribute to the brilliant lion in this magazine from page 37.

Life and our work, however – our battle for a world worth living in – go marching on regardless, in the spirit of Franz Weber himself. The fact that we won our first victory of the year so soon afterwards, on 3 May, is a clear reflection of this. The city council of Barcelona decided to approve, by a vast majority, our concept for a zoo of the future, called ZOOXXI. As a result, Barcelona Zoo will slowly be converted and adapted to correspond to the current shift in values regarding animal protection. Read more about it from page 14.

And on 19 May this year, our long-term campaign «NOzeanium» – against Basel Zoo's senseless and backward-looking plan to build a large aquarium containing thousands of marine animals – reached a turning point and reason prevailed. Basel's electorate voted against the Ozeanium project by 54.56%, demonstrating their progressive character and sense of responsibility. Find out more about this from page 6.

Franz Weber said it 30 years ago: «Ivory is only beautiful on elephants». And 30 years ago, in October 1989 in Lausanne, CITES – the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora – finally granted elephants the highest level of protection available, thus curbing the trade in ivory – thanks in part to the efforts of Fondation Franz Weber as well. However, over the years, the ban has increasingly been chipped away at, and elephants are once again highly endangered, having died in their thousands for the sake of people's insatiable greed for ivory. The next CITES meeting will take place in August this year in Geneva. Fondation Franz Weber will be there on the front-line, fighting for the protection of elephants. Find out more in our report from page 18.

I have been at the helm of Fondation Franz Weber, guiding its destiny, since 2014, and in that time I have managed to build upon the unique foundations that my father Franz Weber laid. But above all I have been able count on an excellent team of professionals and fellow campaigners, to whom I would hereby like to give my warmest and most sincere thanks. We are all proud to bear Franz Weber's torch, to carry it forward and fight, determined, for a just world that is worth living in for animals, nature and people. That is my – that is our – promise to you!

Yours, **Vera Weber**



IN BRIEF



NATURE CONSERVATION

Wind turbines blight the landscape and destroy bird life

Helvetia Nostra and the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation have lodged a complaint with the canton court against the Montagne-de-Buttes (Neuenburg canton) wind farm project. With 19 wind turbines each 180 metres high, dispersed across the meadows typical of the Neuenburg Jura Mountains, the project in beautiful Val-de-Travers would be the largest wind farm ever planned in Switzerland. The wind farm facilities would have fatal consequences for birds and bats, as the project poses a great threat to animals' habitats and presents the danger of collisions with the wind turbines. And, if the project were to go ahead, it would severely endanger the recent, successful return and repopulation of golden eagles in this region – after being absent for 200 years!

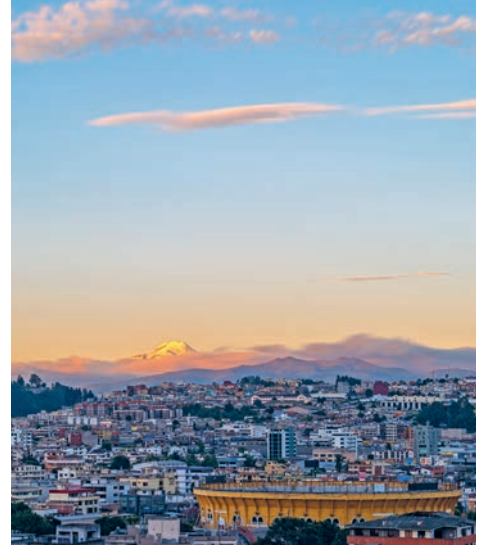


ANIMAL PROTECTION

Initiative against intensive livestock farming on the home straight

The initiative «No intensive livestock farming in Switzerland», launched a year ago by Sentience Politics and Fondation Franz Weber, together with other animal protection organisations, will be submitted in autumn. «We are on target», Meret Schneider is happy to announce. The initiative's campaign manager is confident that they will gather more than the required 100,000 signatures. «Significantly more signatures would give momentum to the voting campaign», highlights Vera Weber. The President of Fondation Franz Weber, who sits on the committee of the intensive livestock farming initiative, therefore has high hopes for a brilliant final stretch: «Anyone who has not signed yet should do so now!» You can obtain the petition forms from:

www.massentierhaltung.ch



ANIMAL PROTECTION

The mayor of Quito wants to see an end to bullfighting

Jorge Yunda, the new mayor of Ecuador's capital Quito, has decided not to extend the lease agreement between the city and the company that organises bullfighting at Belmonte Bullring. After the 2011 referendum, in which citizens voted to ban bullfighting in the Ecuadorian capital, a political group tried to prevent the complete disappearance of bullfighting activities by organising no-kill bullfights. Together with several animal protection groups Fondation Franz Weber denounced these new guises of the activity, as the bulls are still tortured and the horses continue to be maltreated. The new mayor of Quito's decision has finally put an end to all bullfighting activities in the capital!



«The belief that love is only reserved for our fellow human beings is not only a fundamental mistake, but also runs counter to the very spirit of divine law – eternal equity based on harmony and love. The unfair and cruel treatment of completely innocent creatures – animals – is undoubtedly the heaviest burden of guilt that mankind has to bear, as it inevitably leads to injustice towards human beings, leading to hatred and wars.»

FRANZ WEBER



Lee White has Been Appointed Gabon's New Forestry Minister

Good news for the environment and the protection of elephants!

This is, without exaggeration, wonderful news: Lee White, a British-born scientist and Professor of Ecology who acquired Gabonese nationality over ten years ago, has been appointed Minister for Forests, the Sea, the

Environment, and the Climate Plan in Gabon. His appointment is indeed a very uplifting decision, and excellent news for all environmentalists, and those who fight against corruption. Lee White will be able to benefit from an extensive network of contacts, including Prince Charles, and is uncompromising when it comes to environmental matters. For more than twenty years, he has been committed to the protection of species and habitats in Gabon. In 2002, the year in which the Gabonese National Parks were created, he was advisor to the Gabonese administration on matters relating to climate change, national parks, and ecotourism. For the past ten years, he has also been Director of the National Parks Agency in Gabon, which serves as a model throughout the world.

Vera Weber, President of Fondation Franz Weber, says «Lee White is the ideal Minister for the Environment for Gabon. He is fully committed to the conservation of species and habitats, not only in his country, but around the globe.»





This does not just concern Basel, it concerns the world!

The rejection of a public marine aquarium has defeated small-mindedness and allowed tolerance and reason to triumph! By voting against the planned «Ozeanium», Basel's citizens sent a clear message to the world: we must take real action for the oceans and protect seas everywhere.

On 19 May 2019, voters in the canton of Basel-Stadt voiced their opposition to the «Ozeanium» with 54.56% of the vote. An historic date and a momentous result for the future of animal and species protection!

In voting against the «Ozeanium» project, Basel's citizens made their feelings about this antiquated model of an aquarium clearly known, thus causing a worldwide sensation. As a result, numerous international environmental and animal protection organisations congratulated Fondation Franz Weber on its success. «I have great respect for your country's citizens», wrote Haruyoshi Kawai from the Japanese animal protection organisation LightAnimal. His statement went to the heart of the voting result, as the significant outcome of 54.56% votes against the planned construction of the enormous marine aquarium demonstrates the voters' high ethical and moral values. The result will go down in history as one of the global symbols for effective marine protection.

«The rejection of the «Ozeanium» is also a chance for Basel Zoo to start

over», said Vera Weber. «Basel Zoo must rethink its animal ethics and, in the future, invest in real animal and species protection. In so doing, it can set an example as a zoo of the future», explained the President of Fondation Franz Weber, who fought vehemently against the «Ozeanium» project for the past eight years. On 2 May 2019, the city council of Barcelona approved, by a significant majority, the «zoo of the future» project developed by Fondation Franz Weber, called «ZOOXXI». «We would be happy to present the project to Basel Zoo to talk about our vision for a zoo of the future in Basel», said Vera Weber. (Find out more about the ZOOXXI project on page 14).

The historic decision in Basel speaks volumes – marine animals should no longer be plucked from their natural habitats and transported thousands of miles away to be put on show, merely to make people aware of the need to protect them. People want to take real action when it comes to marine protection.

The «No to the Ozeanium» Committee invites the benefactors and institutions who wished to donate to the con-

struction of the «Ozeanium» to deposit the promised money into a fund for marine protection. To be able to report on such marine protection projects would truly be a noble task for Basel Zoo!

Fondation Franz Weber



– «The image of a little fish imprisoned in a plastic bag perfectly encapsulates the opponents' message and is a powerful expression of current public mood. No longer is a public aquarium recognised as an educational institution that works to raise awareness – ideals the director of Basel Zoo was keen to convey in his attempt to make his prestigious, monumental project more palatable as a new crowd-puller.»

Peter Knechtli, Chief Editor
onlinereports.ch, Basel.

«The shift in values is unstoppable»



MATTHIAS MAST
Reporter and Journalist

What significance does winning the «Ozeanium» referendum hold for animal protection in general and for Fondation Franz Weber in particular?

Vera Weber (VW): It is a victory for reason, and for animal protection it represents a shift in societal values, and this is unstoppable. A few years ago, we probably wouldn't have won this referendum, since, at that time, fishes were not given the same importance as terrestrial animals. It was not until 2008 that fish were included in Swiss animal protection law. For Fondation Franz Weber, this victory is another step towards the salvation of animals and their habitats. And it shows that more and more people are thinking se-

«No to the Ozeanium»:

interview with Vera Weber on the historic referendum.

riously about whether it makes sense to lock animals up.

Is the decision against the «Ozeanium» therefore more than a political decision concerning Basel alone?

VW: Yes, unbelievably so! If you look just over the border at Germany, for example, where four more large aquariums are planned, the decision in Basel has given local movements against these ludicrous projects courage and impetus. The decision made in Basel has also sent a message across Europe. It is now scientifically proven that fishes are also sentient beings, and people are gradually becoming aware of that. The «No to the Ozeanium» marks the start of a global movement against large aquariums and the like!

After the «Ozeanium» referendum there were calls to build a large aquarium outside

of the canton of Basel-Stadt. How did you react to that idea?

VW: I thought it was a shameful act of defiance by sore losers. If the canton of Basel-Landschaft were to take the construction of an «Ozeanium» seriously – which I doubt – of course we wouldn't hesitate to fight the plan! I am convinced that the people of Basel-Landschaft are as progressive as those of the canton of Basel-Stadt and indeed the whole of Switzerland.

Fondation Franz Weber initiated the movement against the «Ozeanium». When and how did FFW come to the decision to fight against the planned large aquarium using any and all legal means?

VW: It all started with my friend of twenty years, Monica Biondo. She's a marine biologist who has worked for FFW for the last seven years, and she has been an advocate for marine animals for decades. In 2010,

Shortly after the announcement of the Ozeanium referendum, Swiss television interviews Vera Weber at Basel Town Council.





she told me that plans were underway to build an enormous aquarium in Basel. She opened my eyes to the impact of this project. The idea of building a marine aquarium in a landlocked country like Switzerland was beyond my comprehension then. At that time, FFW had its hands full with campaigns regarding the second home initiative, the conservation of elephants and the prohibition of bullfighting. The welfare of fishes was not one of Fondation Franz Weber's core issues. However, with Monica Biondo's input, fishes gradually came to form part of our agenda.

And was that when the seasoned campaign leader Vera Weber launched her battle against the «Ozeanium»? And won again...

VW: (laughs) It wasn't that straightforward. A few years prior, the chances of

successfully fighting plans of the zoo in the city of Basel – a zoo affectionately known locally as «Zolli» and practically bordering on sacred for many people – were null. Many of our advisors and friends warned me against it, because they feared that Fondation Franz Weber could do itself some harm by making a stand. In May 2014, FFW launched a constructive counter-proposal in Basel called Vision Nemo that used multimedia means to display the ocean without caging animals up and transporting them thousands of miles. However, those in charge of the zoo simply didn't want to know. *(Editor's note: Meanwhile, in New York, a display of the ocean and the animals living within them, similar to Vision Nemo, has successfully opened).* Afterwards, FFW tried to prevent the

project on the cards, by due legal process, specifically by raising objections. In addition to this, we held numerous talks and organised press conferences and different informative events in Basel. We kept our benefactors and readers in and outside of Basel constantly updated about the problems surrounding such an aquarium. The arguments we submitted against the construction of the «Ozeanium» had therefore been on the table since 2014. Unfortunately, until the voting campaign began, the «Ozeanium» supporters refused to have an open debate and discussion. They just never took our criticisms and arguments seriously.

That sounds like an arduous path to achieving your goal. Was it?

If not for the support, and the magnificent work, of the people and organisations that supported the referendum and the voting campaign, this victory for nature conservation and animal protection would never have been possible. We offer you all our heartfelt thanks!

Among others:

Great Councillor Thomas Grossenbacher, Great Councillor Sascha Mazotti, former Great Council President Markus Ritter, Great Councillor Dr. Heinrich Ueberwasser, Prof. Markus Wild and all other Basel politicians and individuals, volunteers and activists, who have fought tirelessly for the «No to the Ozeanium».

As well as the following organisations:

Basel-Stadt Green Party, Greenpeace Basel regional group, Animal Rights Switzerland, BastA!, Junges grünes Bündnis NordWest, VCS beider Basel, Ökostadt Basel, OceanCare, Stiftung für das Tier im Recht, Network for Animal Protection NetAP, fair-fish International & fair-fish Schweiz, LSCV – Ligue Suisse contre l'expérimentation animale et pour les droits des animaux, Verein Hilfe für Tiere in Not.

THANK YOU!

Fondation Franz Weber

VW: It really was, and, for a long time, a lonely one too for FFW. However, more and more fellow campaigners gradually joined us. I offer all of them my heartfelt thanks! When the Green Party called the referendum, after the Great Council of the canton of Basel-Stadt decided, on 17 October 2018 to offer the Heuwaage area for the construction of the «Ozeanium», we were over the moon...

...and was that when you first thought you could vote the «Ozeanium» bill down?

VW: I always believed in the strength of our arguments, which were backed by scientific facts. And I was always convinced that a change in our societal values, in terms of our relationship with animals, was underway. Fishes and marine animals are also benefiting from this change in values.

Outside of Switzerland, what was the reaction to the decision against the «Ozeanium» in Basel?

VW: We received congratulations from all over – Japan, Spain, the USA, Germany, for example – and from animal welfare campaigners, who were all delighted about this progressive decision in Basel. I am convinced that Basel's decision will send a message across the

world and open the door to a zoo of the 21st Century. *(Find out more about Fondation Franz Weber's ZOOXXI project on page 14).*

«Ozeanium» supporters argued that they would raise awareness among the public about marine conservation. Fondation Franz Weber and the «No to the Ozeanium» Committee responded to that with the slogan «protect the seas, in situ». What does that mean exactly?

VW: The mere fact that we turned the zoo into a topic of debate with the referendum, has generated more awareness in the last eight months than the zoo would have managed in ten years. Thanks to the public debate, the entire population has begun to rethink marine and marine animal protection and started up an in-depth conversation about it. The next item on our list is now the trade in marine ornamental fishes for private and large aquariums: the upcoming CITES – the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species – meeting (taking place in Geneva in August 2019) will call for an investigation into, and stricter controls on, the worldwide trade in marine ornamental fishes. This is a petition from Switzerland, the EU and the USA, to which FFW has made a significant contribution.



What are sharks, penguins and rays doing in the middle of Basel? We asked ourselves this question and distributed these figures across Basel..



#wasmacheichhier [what am I doing here] was a street art initiative that formed part of the NOzeanium campaign.



No to the Ozeanium: A victory for marine animals



MONICA BIONDO

Ph.D. Marine Biologist
Head of Research & Conservation

Sandbar sharks, sea otters and giant octopuses: countless animals will now be able to live a life of freedom thanks to the resounding vote against the «Ozeanium». A thorough look at the list of species that emerged during the referendum campaign, showing the animals that were to occupy the tanks. This once again illustrates how important Fondation Franz Weber's fight has been – for the protection of marine animals and against this senseless saltwater aquarium.

«An outdated 50-year-old concept» That was the first thing that sprang to mind in mid-April 2019 when I first saw the list of animals that Basel Zoo intended to display in its planned marine aquarium the «Ozeanium». The *Zolli*, as it is affectionately called by locals, had always advertised its project as «unique» and more innovative than all the other 150 large aquariums already operating in Europe. That was obviously not the case.

A BIT OF BACKGROUND

The zoo's plan was to keep together predatory fishes in a tank that would never have come across each other in their natural habitats. Barracudas from warm, tropical seas would have had to hunt coldwater species such as sardines and herrings. It would be constant stress for the prey fishes that, to entertain visitors, would have formed schools and moved together, as seen in picture books, to protect themselves. It would have been akin to putting a leopard in a rabbit enclosure. The zoo's argument that fish in an aquarium were better off because they would receive permanent care and not be exposed to enemies was therefore utter nonsense.

A fearsome-looking sand tiger shark, up to 2.5 metres long, was also to serve as a visitor magnet, together with its cousins the hammer and sandbar sharks. These species would rarely encounter each other in the wild either. Threatened sand tiger sharks are usually kept separately in aquariums. However, they are very social animals and in the sea they occasionally live in large schools. Much like dolphins and whales, they cultivate friendships. In addition, research found that a third of sand tiger sharks in public aquariums have deformed spines. Due to their swimming behaviour, narrow tanks or malnutrition, the animals can suffer compressed spines, a loss of intervertebral space or vertebra degeneration.

These facts are not our own assertions – they are scientifically proven (1).

DEEP SEA INHABITANTS, DOOMED TO DIE

Basel Zoo even wanted to display ghost sharks or chimaeras, most of whom come from the deep sea. They obviously do not do well in captivity either. They do not even manage to reproduce and are thus doomed to die.

Despite a trade ban across the whole of Europe, European eels were also to be put on display. In the wild, they are in danger of extinction. They also cannot breed; rather, the larvae, known as elvers, are caught and then fattened. A similar approach was to be used for schools of delicate young salmon – perhaps to demonstrate that salmon no longer manage to make it to Basel due to the many engineered river dams?

MONKFISH IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

A monkfish was to be showcased as a further highlight. It seems that its grim appearance and the sheer impossibility of keeping it in captivity make this special fish particularly irresistible. It cannot be touched with bare hands during the capture, as it will die. Yet, even so, only one out of every ten captured animals make it into the aquarium. Con-

finement is the end of the line – a story of suffering from start to finish. The monkfish rarely adapts to the food and must be kept separately. As a relentless predator, it would eat all other animals present in its tank.

The fishes in the planned coral reef tank would have been caught almost exclusively in the wild as well. Even the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), in its strategy document, admits that only 25 species of coral reef fishes can be bred in commercial numbers (2).

–
The highly intelligent octopus.





A FISHY TALE

Time and time again Basel Zoo cited a study by the Federal Veterinary Office (now called the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office), both during public appearances and on the «Ozeanium» website: «A study performed by the Federal Veterinary Office found that around 1.5% of animals do not survive transportation.» (3) Fondation Franz Weber, however, repeatedly referred to a mortality rate of up to 80%.

Such a discrepancy in the figures calls for a closer look. You cannot compare apples to oranges. The mortality rate of up to 80% relates to scientific studies that examined international trade – specifically from capture through the whole supply chain to the aquarium. Fishes can die at every single stage of the journey; for example, from the small-scale fisherman in North Bali to several intermediaries to the exporter. The Federal Veterinary Office study only looked at the mortality rate from the exporter, for example, in Jakarta, to the importer in Zurich. It examined just 12 deliveries of ornamental fishes. Eight of these were freshwater fish shipments. Only four of the shipments actually contained marine fishes and would have been relevant for the «Ozeanium». Of almost 30,000 fishes examined, a mere 364 animals, in other words only a little over 1%, were marine ornamental fishes. And you simply cannot produce any statistics from a sample of just four shipments. (MoBi)

HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, HIGHLY ENDANGERED

The giant octopus even in its natural habitat will only live to the age of five. In captivity, however, it rarely lives beyond the age of two. Nevertheless, there were also plans to put it on display in the failed «Ozeanium», as a pale imitation of itself. The highly intelligent invertebrate beguiles many scientists. Octopuses have inhabited our planet for almost 300 million years. Due to convergent evolution, similar to human beings as vertebrates, the giant octopus has acquired intelligence and awareness. As a cephalopod, its oesophagus is connected to its brain. It has around 1,600 suckers and uses these like fingers to feel, grasp and, just as we do with our tongues, taste. In the wild, climate change afflicts this coldwater animal in particular. Still too little is known in order to even assign the species any IUCN RedList conservation status.

Basel Zoo would not have shied away from obtaining highly endangered species either, the trade of which has been regulated since 2017. This includes nautilus. As their appearance has hardly changed over many periods of the Earth's history, they are regarded as «living fossils». Like their cousin, the giant octopus, nautilus – which prefer to live at depths of 150 metres – do not reproduce when in captivity. They must therefore be caught from the sea – again and again.

CHANGE IN LEGISLATION

In 2012, Switzerland made the progressive step to ban the import of whales and dolphins, which until then could be kept in dolphinariums. In the «Ozeanium», Basel Zoo wanted to display another marine mammal: the sea otter. Only very few aquariums worldwide keep them. They seldom produce offspring when in captivity. As legislation is increasingly

Sources:

- (1) Walters, 2009 / Huber, 2013
- (2) See www.waza.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Aquarium-strategie-German.pdf, S.4
- (3) Studie Veterinäramt: Zur Einfuhr von Zierfischen in die Schweiz. Huber Christine, 2001. Bundesamt für Veterinärwesen. <https://studylib-de.com/doc/2449591/zur-einfuhr-von-zierfischen-in-die-schweiz>

Further reading (selection):

- Journal of Fish Biology: Stevens et al., 2017
- Welternährungsorganisation FAO: Monticino, 2010
- Universität Florida; Livengood and Chapman, 2007
- SPC Live Reef Fish Infos: Rubec et al., 2005

Book about ornamental saltwater fishes:

- Cato et al., 2003

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):

- Wabnitz et al., 2003

shifting in favour of our fellow creatures, it would have been a mockery to display sea otters.

The same applies to the Japanese spider crab. They often die while in transit, as our investigations in South Africa showed. (Editor's note: Journal Franz Weber 2019 special edition on the planned «Ozeanium»; the magazine can be ordered by telephone and is available on our website). These extraordinary creatures are only found off the coast of Japan. Measuring up to around four metres length, with legs fully extended, they are true giants.

In light of all these facts and having fought so hard against the construction of the «Ozeanium» over the last ten years, it is a great joy, and deeply satisfying, for Fondation Franz Weber that these plans have been so emphatically rejected. Basel's inhabitants showed vision and common sense on 19 May 2019. They listened to facts and data. Outdated opinions, a completely obsolete concept and the talking up of «environmental education» and «marine protection» all failed to deceive Basel's electorate.



A LOOK BACK AT OUR CAMPAIGN NOZEANIUM



On 19 May, Basel's voters rejected the construction of the «Ozeanium» in the Heuwaage area of the city by a clear majority. Building on our fact-based campaign, we were able to leave the people of Basel in no doubt as to the disadvantages of this major, 28-metre-high project that is completely out of step with the times: in light of climate change, species extinction and the littering of the seas, building this «Ozeanium» would have been the wrong path to take, the wrong message to send out. That's what the majority of voters recognised! The tremendous cross-party commitment proved decisive for this successful voting result. Thanks to a broad network of people, our NOzeanium campaign became a movement, underpinned by our shared conviction that a change in how we think is urgently needed – in Basel and worldwide. The resulting actions were remarkably creative and varied: an early morning initiative at Heuwaage with 60 people, where we showcased the di-

mensions of the construction project, street art, street campaigning events, spontaneous lunch get-togethers in the city – to name just a few examples. It was only with the personal commitment of all those involved that we were able to take on the financial superiority of the «Ozeanium» supporters' campaign. My personal thanks therefore go to every single person who supported us in one way or another over the last few months, and who enabled our NOzeanium campaign to grow into a movement.

This vote left Basel's *Zolli* acutely aware of its failure to fulfil its role as an early-warning system for the global destruction of the marine flora and fauna, and its missed opportunity to raise awareness among visitors. We are hopeful that those in charge of the zoo, who initially reacted against us with subjective allegations and accusations, will as a next step conduct a fact-based analysis of the failed project. An analysis that will lead to the realization that the current visual and emotional attractions need to evolve in order to raise awareness and keep educating: Basel Zoo's «innocent» animal world of today urgently needs an emotive, educational and thought-provoking extension. The *Zolli* must lead by example with its clear, comprehensible commitment to saving and conserving our ecosystems and thus encourage visitors to take more responsibility for their environment. We must work with all our might to protect animal habitats such that not only the lives of the few animals in the zoos are secured, but the lives of as many living creatures on our planet as possible.

Basel now has the opportunity – with the *Zolli* – to revamp the area up to Heuwaage, to give the Basel Zoo's animals more space and provide locals with more green space.

I look forward to Basel's *Zolli* becoming a sustainable and forward-looking alerter and educator. A *Zolli* that finds its own voice to call out against the advancing destruction of animal and aquatic life. Our *Zolli*, becoming a true conservation pioneer!

Thomas Grossenbacher, Great Councillor Greens BS



ZOOXXI – The first foundation stone has been laid in Barcelona!



LEONARDO ANSELMi

Director of FFW for the South of
Europe and Latin America



Fondation Franz Weber (FFW) has developed a modern zoo project that promotes zoos adapted to current moral values: ZOOXXI. FFW's efforts have recently borne fruit – ZOOXXI has been adopted for its zoological park by the City of Barcelona. This was a citizen's initiative, driven by Fondation Franz Weber in collaboration with the animal protection association Libera, which led to a legislative amendment on 3 May 2019. Consequently, this has put an end to the current zoo model in Barcelona.

ZOOXXI IN BARCELONA – THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE FUTURE

This historic victory is the first step in the ZOOXXI campaign. It is an important decision which moves away from the view that nature was created for human domination, bringing us closer to the concept of peaceful cohabitation. The first foundation stone has been laid to build our future.

BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS ZOOXXI?

In an interview I did on Barcelona's public TV channel, I was asked to define the project in a few words. My response was quite simple: «ZOOXXI is everything that zoos claim to be».

Zoos tell us that they are helping «conserve» species and they «inform» and «make people aware» of the problems faced by animals around the world. However, it is quite evident that this is not the case, they have succeeded only in achieving their own self-preservation. They say that they carry out «research», and yet what they learn about animals in captivity can only be used within the framework of captivity. This so-called research does not provide meaningful information on animals' natural behaviour and requirements in their natural habitats. Zoos talk about «education», but they never question their captivity model. The ZOOXXI campaign aims to reconcile these claims with reality and bring zoos into the twenty-first century.

WHAT DOES ZOOXXI PROPOSE?

ZOOXXI is calling for an environmental, scientific, and ethical revolution – the redevelopment of zoos throughout the world, in order to adapt them to modern science and the moral values of the twenty-first century. The idea is to transform zoos, which are currently and almost exclusively devoted to entertainment, into places

that really focus on research, conservation and education. The project is based on five pillars:

- ✿ **Conservation,** to give priority to the protection of animals in their natural habitat. This means that zoos must carry out concrete conservation projects in natural environments (in situ), and not restrict their activities to the display of living beings behind bars. In this respect, priority must be given to local and regional species. And, lastly, a conservation-based zoo means that any animal reproduction should only take place in order to reintroduce animals to the wild for the medium or long term.

- ✿ **Science:** Each zoo must create a scientific research centre to study the natural behaviour of animals and animal «sentience». Individual animals have cognitive, emotional capacities and consciousness. The aim is to improve human knowledge of animals and their habitats, while, at the same time, increasing human empathy towards other animal species.

- ✿ **Ethics:** Zoos should not restrict themselves to simply «displaying» animals from other parts of the world. They need to be transformed into veritable animal rescue and treatment centres: for the reintroduction of injured and endangered animals, as well as for the care of illegally traded animals seized by the police. An ethical zoo also means that it must give up the practice of culling (the slaughter of «surplus» baby animals) as well as the capture of animals from the wild.

- ✿ **Good Governance,** absolute transparency with regard to the meth-

ods applied and the underlying decision-making mechanisms is essential. This principle can only be delivered by setting up a scientific and ethical committee that is composed of experts for all species kept in the zoo.

- ✿ **Education:** Real education programs that inform visitors of the natural behaviour of animals and that enhance greater empathy towards other species. Education will be provided through new immersive technologies, particularly virtual reality that are closely linked with the concrete in situ conservation projects implemented by the zoo. Zoological parks need to move away from just displaying animals towards the observation of them in their natural habitats.

PROTECTION OF SPECIES AND THEIR NATURAL HABITATS

According to the latest scientific research, and in accordance with current moral values, animals are sentient beings that have physical and psychological needs, cognitive and emotional capacities and differing forms of consciousness. There is no doubt that captivity causes suffering for animals, particularly since they are inhibited from expressing their natural behaviour. It is therefore imperative that zoos focus on the protection of species and habitats before thinking about displaying animals to the public. Zoos need to provide each animal with conditions as close as possible to their natural environment.

ZOOXXI completely calls into question zoos' current model, which is based on business and profit, animal reproduction, and the exchange of animals. The project calls on zoos to orient their activities towards the protection of species and individual animals



through conservation programmes in natural environments. The best way to protect biodiversity is to take profound measures to protect habitats.

Not only are such measures becoming increasingly urgent in view of the accelerated disappearance of species and their habitats, but they would also enable zoo visitors to observe natural animal behaviour directly. ZOOXXI proposes that zoos set up scientific and technological centres that will permit visitors, through immersive and interactive experiences, to discover in situ conservation projects implemented by the zoo, and to gain a better understanding of animals' behaviour in their natural habitats. This way, zoos will play an indisputably important educational role that will enable visitors to adopt new environmentally friendly practices, which ultimately will help protect biodiversity.

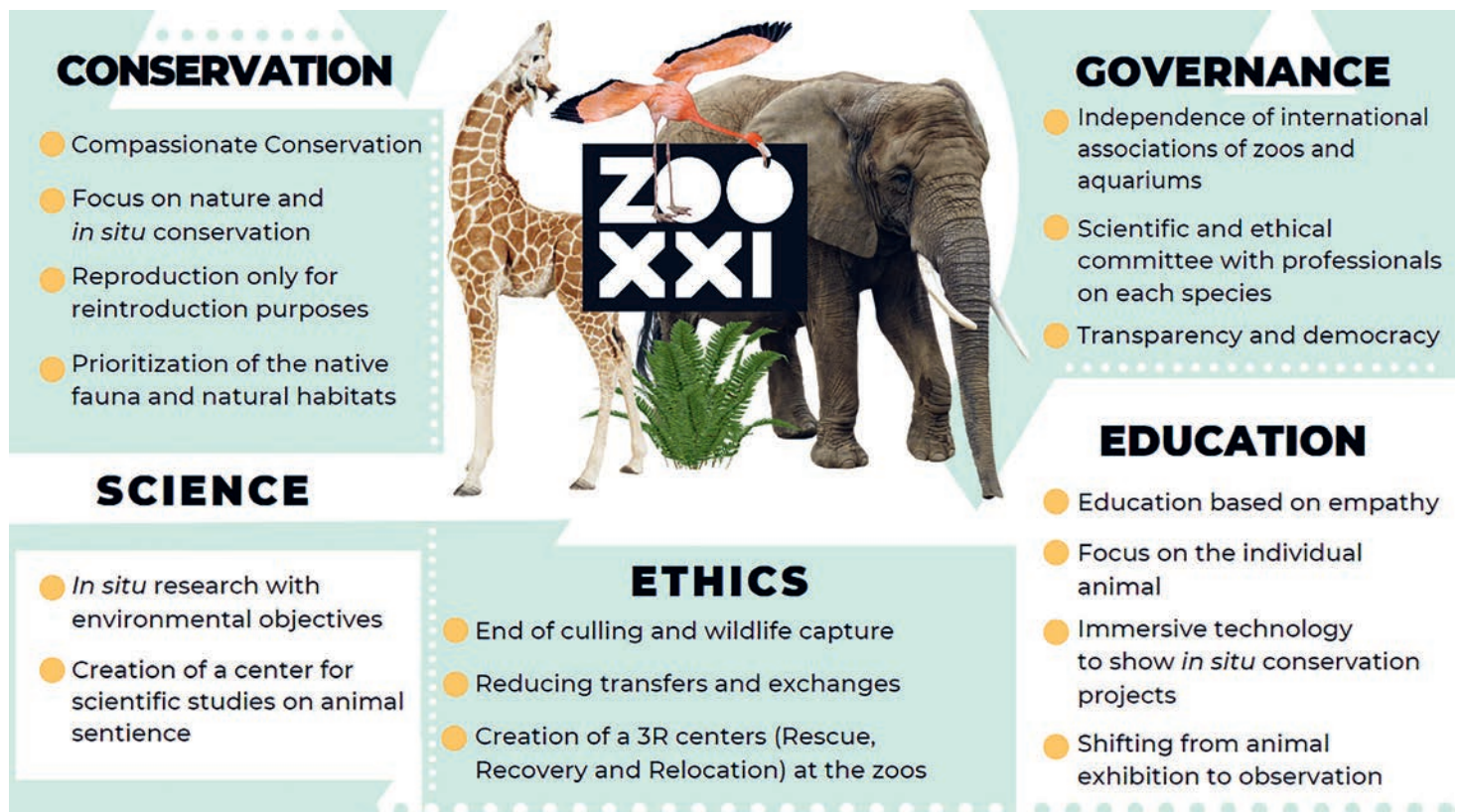
NO CLOSURE OF ZOOS

With this new model, zoos in the twenty-first century will operate in a network, and, instead of interchanging animals, will exchange images and scientific information from various conservation programmes. They will work closely together – one zoo will protect a certain natural area, the next zoo will take care of another, and so on. Each zoo will have its own area of responsibility.

The ZOOXXI campaign is determined to avoid the closure of zoos. A report drawn up by the FFW team, in collaboration with other animal associations in Barcelona, shows that the closure of zoos would have a devastating effect on the animals currently in them. In the best-case scenario, such animals would end up in other zoos. Worse, they would be sold to tanneries or exotic restaurants. Only a tiny frac-

tion of the animals are able to be transferred to sanctuaries and reserves, and even a smaller number would be released into the wild. Therefore, the project does not call for the closure of zoos since it would be tantamount to missing a great opportunity to transform them to rescue and research centres that make use of the existing specialists and facilities.

ZOOXXI is the future: it is the best way to address our past mistakes and develop a fruitful relationship between humans and the environment. It is also the best way to build a future based on empathy and sound reason rather than on exploitation and contempt. Now that Barcelona has adopted this ground-breaking initiative, the rest of the world can follow suit. There are thousands of animals that need saving, vast habitats to preserve, and hundreds of zoos to transform.





**END TRADING IN
ENDANGERED SPECIES!**
TAKE ACTION!

ffw.ch

IBAN: CH31 0900 0000 1800 6117 3



**FONDATION
FRANZ
WEBER**

Massacre of



With a blind eye being turned to the ivory trade, poaching in Africa continues unabated. This has dramatic consequences.

Within seven years, a third of African elephants have been be wiped out!

Fondation Franz Weber (FFW) is fighting by all legal means against the slaughter of the gentle giants.

elephants for ivory.



ADAM CRUISE
Journalist & Author

According to a census on the entire continent in 2016, one third of African elephants were eradicated in just seven years. The main reasons for this tragedy are:

- ✿ Rampant poaching, further fuelled by an insatiable global greed for ivory that shows no signs of diminishing.
- ✿ Loss of habitat as people continue to invade areas of untouched nature.
- ✿ Trade in live elephants for zoos and circuses all over the world.
- ✿ The ongoing practice of uncontrolled trophy hunting.

CONCLUSION:

If nothing is done to fight hunting and to combat the displacement of these gentle giants, there is a risk that African elephants will become extinct in the wild in less than 10 years!

—
Killed for ivory: an elephant shot by poachers in South Africa's Kruger National Park.



Stacked tusks from hundreds of animals in South Africa. Most elephants are killed because of the global demand for ivory.



The elephant census was a wake-up call for the international community. Governments took immediate action to stop the massacre. The USA, and shortly afterwards China, the two biggest ivory consumers, introduced an almost complete ban on domestic sales of ivory, while Kenya continued to destroy its national ivory stocks. Dozens of other countries followed suit. The USA additionally applied a ban on elephant trophy hunting in countries such as Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Botswana placed a ban on elephant hunting and other endangered wildlife within its country borders.

THE EU PREVENTS URGENTLY REQUIRED PROTECTION

On an international scale, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is supposed to

guarantee the protection of African elephants.

In 1989 the entire African elephant population was placed on Appendix I of

the Convention – this equates to a full trade ban.

Since then, however, the protection status of African elephants has been repeatedly torpedoed (see box above).

APPROVED SALE OF IVORY STOCKS ENDANGERS ELEPHANTS

Elephants from most African countries are now listed by CITES in Appendix I. They therefore have the highest level of protection in the Convention. This means that elephants and elephant parts cannot be commercially traded, as the species is considered endangered. However, in 1997 and 2008, four southern African countries – Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe – convinced CITES that their elephant populations were growing, which consequently led to their downgrading to Appendix II. These four countries were allowed to sell their ivory stocks in a one-off major sales campaign: in 1999, when 60 tonnes went to Japan, and in 2008, when 102 tonnes of ivory were sold to China and Japan. These one-off sales swiftly generated huge demand for ivory, which in turn triggered a massacre of elephants across the whole continent. In spite of the devastating consequences, elephants in these countries remain listed in Appendix II to date.

Local markets with ivory products all over the globe, from New Zealand to Japan, fuel the killing of elephants in Africa.





When the 183 member states of the International Convention met at the end of 2016 for the Seventeenth Conference of the Parties (CoP17) in Johannesburg, South Africa, they missed yet another opportunity to place all African elephants under the full protection they so urgently need. This happened despite Botswana's sensational change of heart. It was one of the four countries previously responsible for the catastrophic sale of ivory stocks, yet Botswana's Minister for the Environment at the time, Tshekedi Khama, made a passionate appeal to the delegates who had gathered from all over the world, to increase the protection of all elephants in southern Africa by including them in Appendix I. His plea, however, fell on deaf ears. It was the 28 member-strong bloc of the European Union, of all the groups, that prevented this upgrading with its shocking «no» in the final vote. And Switzerland voted «no» on that day too! This fatal decision continued to leave the door open for southern African countries to profit from elephants.

THE WORST HAS HAPPENED

Even though the USA and China have already banned domestic sales of ivory, the trading of such is still permitted within the European Union. Equally, the EU remains the largest exporter of «antique» ivory. After China replaced Japan as the biggest consumer country in the region, exports from the EU now

mainly head to East Asia. With the ivory trade, both legal and illegal, showing no signs of stopping, elephant poaching meanwhile continues unabated. The illegal killing of elephants remains lucrative. And there are clear signs that this scourge, devastating the continent, is also escalating in southern Africa, which used to be considered an elephant stronghold.

Poaching elephants for their tusks has significantly increased in South Africa. After 14 years of no poaching, in 2014 it was reported that two elephants had been killed unlawfully. Since then this number has increased at an alarming rate. By 2015, ten times as many elephants had already been poached, and by 2016 this figure had doubled once again. In the past year, a total of 72 elephants were killed illegally for their tusks – a trend that could continue in 2019 and beyond if nothing is done to stop this right now!

According to the latest report by MIKE (the «Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants» programme), a sustained increase in poaching could lead to South Africa becoming a major gateway for illegal ivory exports to the East. However, this already seems to be the case now: several recent confiscations of ivory at Johannesburg international airport show that South Africa is becoming a significant hub for illegal ivory exports to Asia.

ELEPHANTS AS ANIMAL FEED

The situation in Botswana is even worse. The change of President in 2018 represented a radical change of course politically: the new President, Mokgweetsi Masisi, lifted the ban on trophy hunting imposed by his predecessor Ian Khama. Masisi even plans to kill hundreds of elephants to process the meat for animal feed.

BOTSWANA'S SHOCKING RENUNCIATION OF ELEPHANT PROTECTION

The President of Botswana, Mokgweetsi Masisi, recently held a conference in the city of Kasane in northern Botswana, attended by heads of state and Ministers for the Environment from Angola, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. At the conference, the President of Botswana gave the other heads of state stools made from elephant feet. This macabre «gift» is symbolic of the dreadful notion of economically motivated environmental protection, which endorses the use of elephants for trophy hunting or for the trade in ivory, skin and elephant meat.



Although it is illegal to sell whole tusks, this baby elephant tusk was openly on sale in a market in South Africa.

Three- to five-year-old baby elephants brutally separated from their mothers in the wild wait in small enclosures to be exported abroad, mostly to China.



According to Masisi there are currently too many elephants living in Botswana. However, a recently taken scientific aerial photograph of north Botswana – where the country’s elephants are concentrated – shows that poaching has shot up and the total population of elephants living in Botswana has actually shrunk by 15%. The introduction of hunting and culling would further aggravate the situation.

After its promising turnaround in 2016, Botswana – like Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe before it – now shamelessly wants to go back to making a profit from elephants (find out more in our article on page 26). For the next CITES-Conference of the Parties (CoP18), the four countries are submit-

ting a joint proposal for another large-scale sale of their national ivory stocks. Zambia too is still trying to downgrade its elephant population to Appendix II, so that it can ease the regulations on the exportation of its ivory stocks and other elephant parts.

TRADE IN LIVE ELEPHANTS

As if the greed for ivory weren’t enough, the demand for live elephants also poses a threat to the future of these animals. In recent years, Namibia and Zimbabwe have intensified their efforts to sell wild elephants.

As a result, in May 2019 six elephants were shipped from Namibia to the Democratic Republic of Congo – a country where elephant poaching is widespread.

According to the of Namibia this was a «trial run, to ensure that future exports run smoothly». Namibia has already exported elephants to zoos in Cuba and Mexico. Last year, the country tried to export elephants to a zoo in Dubai but was prevented from doing so due to a public outcry over it. In the end, Dubai purchased the animals from Zimbabwe – a country that has no scruples in selling dozens of elephants caught in the wild despite a spate of worldwide protests. In the last five years, Zimbabwe has sold over 100 baby elephants for a total of around 3 million Swiss Francs. Aside from the four elephants for Dubai, all of the other animals were sent to China: ironically, although the country has banned the sale of ivory, it has not banned the sale of live elephants.

HUNTING BY HELICOPTER: BABY ELEPHANTS SNATCHED FROM THEIR MOTHERS FOR ZOOS IN CHINA

In Zimbabwe, baby elephants are shot with arrows from a helicopter, while their mothers are driven away by a nose-diving helicopter. Poachers on the ground rapidly approach in tractors and trucks to bundle the unconscious calves into trailers before the enraged mothers return. The young elephants are then crammed into a tiny enclosure, where they are prepared for the flight, to then be shipped to different zoos and safari parks all over China. Many of the young elephants are still dependent on their mothers’ milk. Most of them suffer from hunger and become ill; some even die.



—
An elephant poacher's tools and weapons.

Fondation Franz Weber (FFW) has it on good authority that another consignment of 35 baby elephants has been penned up in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, ready to be flown to China.

DOMESTIC IVORY MARKET ON THE EDGE OF THE LAW

The trade in raw ivory is banned in South Africa. In the European Union, however, trading «antique» ivory is

permitted. Dealers in South Africa, who allegedly want to sell antique ivory items, must be registered in order to do so. Buyers also need permission to purchase and own ivory.

This legal ivory market in South Africa is flourishing. But is everything above board? To answer this question, FFW took a look at the South African market in February and March 2019. Our investigation found that none of the dealers that FFW researched had any of the documents necessary for selling. Most dealers did not even know about this requirement. All transactions thus took place without any documentation regarding the age and origin of the items. The buyers and the sellers had none of the relevant permits. This means that ivory that has actually come

—
Carved ivory is available in shops and markets all over Zimbabwe and South Africa.



from recently killed elephants can be readily offered and sold as «antique».

Our investigation shows that most ivory is bought from antiques wholesalers that, in general, are from Nigeria or Zimbabwe. Some ivory can even be bought online, without any documents or authorisation. In short, anyone could buy ivory in small amounts and take it abroad. There is virtually no risk of being caught. Judging by the extensive displays in many shops in South Africa, business is booming, with tourists from Asia and Europe making up most of the buyers.

A Dutch buyer openly admitted to FFW that: «The South African customs authority has no idea of the regulations and would never be able to spot the difference between bones and ivory.» He told us that for 30 years he had been taking items to Europe to resell and had never encountered any problems.

While there is still no market in Botswana at the moment, Namibia and Zimbabwe have flourishing domestic ivory markets.

Both countries can sell carved or processed ivory within their respective country borders. Only raw tusks cannot be sold. Unlike South Africa, these carvings do not have to be «antique» and can, entirely legally, come from recently killed elephants. Given that the Chinese invest massively in both countries, there is concern that ivory is being illegally laundered in the guise of official trading, and that ivory from poaching will reach the Far East via South Africa.

ELEPHANTS URGENTLY NEED OUR HELP

Despite these unsettling developments over the last three years, Fondation Franz Weber continues working tirelessly to protect African elephants from extinction. In view of the shameless lobbying by southern African countries to encourage CITES to once again weaken trade restrictions on elephants, protecting these animals is a matter of absolute urgency. The relevant decisions about the future of African elephants should have been made during the Conference of the Parties (CoP18) in Sri Lanka in May 2019. However, after terrorist attacks in April in Colombo, CoP18 was pushed

back to August. As a result, southern African countries have gained more time to strengthen their position.

Nevertheless, the delay has also given FFW and its partner organisations time to counter the demands of these countries. Fondation Franz Weber provides technical assistance and advice to the African Elephant Coalition (AEC) – a strong group of 30 African countries representing two thirds of African elephant populations. This group is the true voice of elephants in Africa: it calls for the full protection of all African elephants by including them in Appendix I, as well as the reduction and destruction of national ivory stocks, the closing down of the domestic markets and an end to the trade in live elephants.

However, the AEC desperately needs help. FFW is therefore making an urgent appeal: only a global public protest against the organised mass slaughtering of elephants will convince the contracting parties of CITES that Africa's gentle giants are only in with a chance of survival if they receive full protection, no ifs or buts.



Fondation Franz Weber battles tirelessly for elephants in Africa and demands a complete ban on the ivory trade.





The African Elephant CoP18 – CITES held account



ANNA ZANGGER

Lawyer



The Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) regulates international trade in species of fauna and flora threatened with extinction. Every three years, the Conference of the Parties (CoP), which brings together all the member States of CITES, meets to make decisions about trade. The representatives of the member States determine which species qualify for better protection, and which species can be traded freely.

Elephant: CITES must be in table

The eighteenth Conference of the Parties (CoP18) was scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka, in May–June of this year. Unfortunately, the tragic Easter bombings in Colombo in April prompted the organisers to postpone the Conference. It will now be held in Geneva from 16 to 28 August 2019.

One of the most controversial species, which is the subject of much debate in CITES, is the emblematic African elephant. The threats to the survival of the African elephant are as serious as they are variable: loss of habitat – which inevitably leads to conflict with human beings –, droughts, poaching, and the capture of elephants for overseas zoos – there is no respite for African elephants. The demand for ivory, particularly in the Asian markets, is so high that the price per kilogram has risen to astronomical levels.

CITES again and again deliberates in how best to regulate the trade in elephants – above all, the ivory trade. There are two opposing sides: those who are in favour of trade, and who want to allow the free trade of ivory

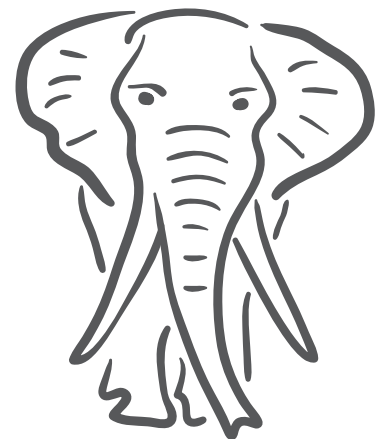
on an international and national level; and conservationists, who believe that the only way to protect them is to completely prohibit – unreservedly and without compromise – any trade in elephants and elephant products.

Currently, the African elephant does not have a clear status under CITES regulations. Most elephant populations in Africa are listed in Appendix I of CITES, which prohibits any commercial trade in ivory. However, the populations of four countries are listed in Appendix II of CITES, namely those in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. The differential listing of elephants creates an ambiguity and loopholes that are exploited by ivory traffickers.

The only period in recent history when the elephant populations in Africa were able to recover and were safe from poaching, followed after the seventh CoP in 1989. This took place in Lausanne during which all the elephant populations in Africa were listed on Appendix I of CITES. Since then, the above-mentioned populations of the four countries have been downgraded

to Appendix II, and the situation has gone from bad to worse.

However, opposition is growing. An alliance of more than thirty African states called the African Elephant Coalition (AEC), has been fighting for more than ten years to improve the international protection of elephants. This year, the AEC will put forward four proposals at the CoP18.



HANDS OFF IVORY!



THE AEC'S PROPOSALS TO CITES-COP18 FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL ELEPHANTS:

1. List all African elephants on Appendix I of CITES. The AEC believes that the species has to be reviewed as a whole and protected in a non-differential way. Indeed, elephants are highly migratory, and it is thus not possible, according to specialist biologists, to define national elephant populations. As a result, differential listing makes absolutely no sense.

2. Closure of all domestic ivory markets. In principle, CITES only regulates international trade. However, even though certain key domestic markets have recently been closed, such as in the US and China, other markets, including the EU and Japan, continue to authorise certain forms of ivory trade. These domestic markets make it all too often possible to launder poached ivory. For example, through the falsification of documents and staining ivory to make it look older. These markets therefore urgently need to be closed.

3. Adoption of clear and legally binding guidelines on the trade of live elephants. Many baby elephants are taken from their families, particularly in Zimbabwe, and are sent to zoos around the world. In fact,

CITES does not consider the trade in animals for zoos as <commercial>. The regulations are therefore weak and relatively vague. Many of these zoos and other places of captivity do not have the facilities to take care of the wild-caught animals in an adequate manner. Furthermore, elephants are highly intelligent and sociable animals whose needs are not restricted to a certain number of square metres and adequate forage. Thus, only in situ conservation centres, that is to say, centres in the natural habitat can realistically be considered suitable.

4. Better management of ivory stocks. Illegally obtained ivory from poaching is seized by the authorities in each country. The ivory is then placed in storage. The resulting ivory stocks have been growing from year to year and are beginning to pose security problems for these countries as the ivory stocks are often pillaged. The stolen ivory is then laundered in domestic ivory markets or is smuggled internationally. It is imperative then that CITES issues clear guidelines on the management of these national ivory stocks. The countries concerned must produce regular reports on their stocks so that any possible shortcomings and losses of ivory can be identified.

Fondation Franz Weber (FFW) has actively supported the AEC since its creation. The organisation backs the Coalition's proposals put forward at the CoP18. As an official observer, FFW will be present in Geneva to monitor the proceedings and provide the AEC with the support it may require in putting their proposals forward.

CITES is far from being an ideal convention. However, it has set up a control and licensing system that effectively regulates the international trade in species. This is why FFW operates within the framework of this system to influence the outcome of the debate. This year, more than ever before and especially in view of the mass extinction of species and environmental

catastrophes, countries urgently need to assume their responsibilities and act in the best interests of the species, rather than trade. Almost exactly thirty years ago, the seventh CoP in Lausanne decided to give African elephants complete protection. Fondation Franz Weber will be doing everything in our power to ensure that history will repeat itself.



CITES – The aquarium industry under the microscope



ANNA ZANGGER
Lawyer

The oceans are becoming increasingly polluted and natural marine habitats are disappearing fast. Climate change and excessive fishing are additional threats to the survival of fishes, as is the capture of fishes for private and public aquariums.

There are around 1,000 public aquariums and at least 2 million private aquarium owners in the world. This demand by the aquarium industry can only be met by taking increasing numbers of fishes out of the sea. The vast majority are taken wild from coral reefs since most of the coral reef fishes cannot be bred in captivity – this fact alone means they are not suited to captivity.

Coral reef fishes, which are much sought after by the aquarium industry, are often captured in the wild using poison such as cyanide. Not only is the survival rate after capture and transportation very low, but their natural habitats are also adversely affected by this fishing method. This is not to mention the devastating impact on the whole ecosystem when eradicating a species from



a habitat in which it belongs, and in which it is perfectly integrated.

FFW's recent victory against the large aquarium project «Ozeanium» in Basel, which was rejected by the people of Basel on 19 May 2019, is a first important step towards stronger protection of the oceans. However, the aquarium industry continues to decimate coral fish populations and destroy their habitats.

As of today, the international trade in coral reef fishes is virtually unregulated. Only a group of species, seahorses, and two species of fishes – the napoleon fish and the clarion angelfish – are protected by the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES). Consequently, there are hardly any requirements with regard to capture, handling, transportation and keeping facilities. There is also an abysmal lack of data on the biology and ecology of coral reef fishes, and on the trade's impact on marine ecosystems. In short, it is currently impossible to monitor and control the trade in coral reef fishes for the aquarium industry or to assess its impact.

FFW wants to change this catastrophic situation. Therefore, the foundation presented the research conducted by Dr. Monica V. Biondo, a marine biologist specialising on the trade of marine ornamental fishes, to various member countries of CITES. The aim was to highlight the need for an urgent study of this trade's impact on species and natural habitats. Switzerland, the European Union and the United States were convinced of the significance of the data presented to them. Subsequently, these Parties have submitted a document for the next CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP18), which will be held in August in Geneva, to request a thorough investigation into the international trade of coral reef fishes. The Parties to the Convention will then consider whether to commission a study, which may in the future lead to recommendations for better international protection of coral reef fishes.

As an official observer at the CITES CoPs for the past thirty years, Fondation Franz Weber will closely monitor the debate on this issue.

FFW will also monitor developments on the Banggai cardinal fish, an Indonesian coral reef fish species that is severely threatened by the aquarium industry. This small fish, which is only found in a small area in Indonesia and whose populations have decreased by more than 90% due to their high demand from the aquarium industry, was placed by FFW on the agenda of the last CoP (September 2016, in Johannesburg). Although the species was not granted an official protection by the CoP, Indonesia was obliged to take firmer measures to protect the species. At the upcoming CoP (CoP18), the CITES Animal Committee will report on Indonesia's progress in this regard.

The question is: Will the Parties at CoP18, who will also decide on the future of the African elephant, finally find the courage to take decisions to restrict the international and damaging trade in species already heavily threatened by climate change and habitat loss? The loss of habitat and global warming already pose very serious threats to marine life without adding the unnecessary pressure of trade!



–
Taking animals out of the sea for the aquarium industry is putting undue strain on their habitats.

What is a fighting bull?



AMBRE SANCHEZ
Journalist

Criminals always find a way to justify their crimes. Bullfighters are no exception to the rule. Although their «passion» is a sordid one that consists of slowly torturing and killing an animal that is hunted down in a space he cannot escape from, the self-declared «aficionados» – bullfighting connoisseurs – are never short of arguments.



—
The corrida is certainly not on a bull's to-do list.

«If I were an animal, I wouldn't want to be a kitten or a little dog, but a fighting bull. I would surely die, but (...) my destiny would be a glorious one!» No bullfighter would contest this statement by Simon Casas, a former torero and current director of the Nîmes Amphitheatre. For him and for most of the fanatic bullfighters, animal abuse consists of «keeping a dog in a flat and carrying it in one's arms». For these individuals, the so-called fighting bull, the «toro», is a gladiator. Based on this reasoning, some even claim that bullfighting is good for the bulls and that the corrida guarantees their well-being! This sort of anthropomorphism is an aberration on many levels and demonstrates shameless bad faith.

THE MYTH OF THE AUROCHS

Bulls are animals that do not give a fig about glory. Unlike a human! A bull is a sociable animal that tends to run away from or ignore humans when he is in his herd and feels safe amongst his own kind. He will only charge when he feels



isolated and threatened. For the bull, whose senses are heightened and whose life has always been peaceful, the arena is a traumatic shock. He is all alone facing a whole multitude of colourfully dressed enemies who harass him from every side, he is confronted by the awful din of thousands of spectators and the protagonists of the corrida. Condemned to charge at an empty cape – the decoy that his enemies use against him – he gradually uses up his energy and loses his confidence. Aside from the bodily injuries, the worst damage caused by the bullfighting ritual is the psychic obliteration that it induces in the first few minutes. Far from making him proud, this barbaric ritual condemns the bull to an agonising death.

Indeed, in his «language» and life as an animal, the notion of triumph or success only exists in terms of his survival, that is eating grass, ruminating, and producing offspring. As a male, his only purpose in life is to defeat other males in order to mate with cows. And regardless of what Simon Casas thinks, the Corrida is certainly not on a bull's «to-do list». Far from being an aurochs – the large prehistoric ox that bullfighters imagine to be the epitome of ferocity – the fighting bull is a ruminant that is accustomed to the comfortable conditions provided by his breeder.

Like all reared animals from dairy cows to dwarf goats, the bull is subject to various health standards. A bull's development is by no means dependent on Mother Nature. In order to ensure a bull's optimal growth that will make him into the majestic animal with a glossy coat and powerful muscles that thrills corrida lovers, he has to be vaccinated, dewormed, fed hay, granules, and water several times a day, and sometimes even trained to run in front of horses to develop his breathing capacity. This training scheme brings

the bulls into daily contact with the livestock farmers, and you would be surprised to see the docility of them as they run towards the trailers as soon as they hear the tractor bringing them their food several times a day. Furthermore, even though bullfighters try at all costs to conceal any attachment to the bulls, as this would destroy the myth of an untameable beast, some breeders and toreros do in fact develop a bond of complicity and close friendship with their bulls.

A DEGENERATE BEAST

Whatever his breed, a bull is a powerful animal armed with formidable horns. His role is to protect a herd and fight any potential adversaries. This is also true for the «brave toro» breed. The breed has by no means been selected to be made into Spanish fighting bulls out of a natural temperament.

Far from being a heaven-sent gift or an innate characteristic, this temperament is the product of a deliberate selection process. Bullfighters neglect to mention the fact that in Spanish bullfighting, only the most aggressive bulls are used for breeding. During the *tientas* (tests of bravery), calves that are around a year old are confronted by men and sometimes a *picador* – a person on horseback armed with a long pointed lance, which is used to injure the animals in order to see how they react to pain. If, despite the injury, the calf attacks and does not attempt to avoid a confrontation but shows that it has a pugnacious nature and a real desire to defend itself, it will be sent away for breeding in order to produce future fighting bulls. If the calf refuses to fight or attempts to flee, it is sent to the *abattoir*.

INBREEDING

Due to inbred mixes, in accordance with the popularity of the breeding farms –

around 95% of the bulls come from the same stock – it is not surprising that these criteria have, after several centuries of selection and inbreeding, resulted in bulls that have a short fuse and are particularly aggressive.

This character trait has become a major headache for breeders. It is not unusual for bulls, which are in a completely savage state, to fight to the death in the pasture. The livestock farmers do not hide the fact that the occurrence of daily violence obliges them to place protective devices on their bulls' horns, called *fundas*, which alleviate the impact of the blows from the horns. Without these *fundas*, some farmers have observed a loss rate of up to 40% of their livestock.

PROPAGANDA

There are no limits to the perversity of bullfighters. They are eager to rejuvenate the ageing ranks of the «*aficionados*», they brainwash future generations by telling children that bullfighting is the ultimate destiny of any bull worthy of the name. Bullfighters even publish stories for children, in which the bulls themselves are seemingly passionate about bullfighting ... Aimed at little children in nursery school, the storybook *Domino* tells the eponymous story of a young bull whose only goal in life is to die in an arena ... what an outrageous lie!

Fondation Franz Weber has been actively fighting for many years against bullfighting and everything it involves, including the exposure of children to these cruel practices. One of the foundation's missions is to provide information and reports to the authorities, international organisations, and individuals about the lies that the bullfighting «aficionados» pedal. Cruelty against animals can never be justified – it must be abolished once and for all!



Swiss volunteers at the Equidad animal sanctuary!



ALEJANDRA GARCÍA

Director of the Equidad
animal sanctuary and
coordinator of ZOOXXI
in Latin America

With Christmas still a long way off, the Argentine winter spoilt us this year by giving our hard-working team the biggest surprise: the arrival of three young and dedicated volunteers from Switzerland. Invaluable help and proof – if ever it were needed – that our activities generate interest from people across the world.

Nadine feeding the animals at Equidad.





You have followed our stories and struggles, and you know that the last two years has been particularly rich in victories as well as challenges for the team of the Equidad animal sanctuary. With the arrival of several hundred new animals on the site, and particularly the abused horses from Salta (all of which required extensive and urgent care) any help is most welcome and valuable for us. We received unsolicited support from Bern - Switzerland, with the arrival of three fine souls who wanted to make themselves useful. Armed with good humour and plenty of goodwill, Vivianne, Nadine, and Julian rolled up their sleeves to help our charges. Their enthusiasm compensated for their lack of experience and their limited knowledge of Spanish. Anxious to do a good job at all times, they quickly memorised all the main requirements. Their instincts and compassion did the rest as they looked after our herds. Tenderness is a universal language and there is nothing better in communication with animals.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

This support has been invaluable for us in several respects: On a daily basis, it has made a big difference for our team and our charges. Up and ready for work at 8:30 a.m., like the rest of the staff, our trainees took on any task. They cleaned the enclosures, fed the donkeys and horses, treated the sick, embarked DIY projects, and so on. Thanks to their ability to adapt, Vivianne, Nadine, and Julian, very soon became an integral part of the team. Even though they knew nothing – or almost nothing – about –

Julian preparing vegetables for the animals.



feeding and looking after horses, they were soon able to take over from us like real experts, which gave us some much appreciated breathing space. Of course, we are not the only ones who appreciate their help. Our equine inhabitants received additional petting and attention! Furthermore, the volunteers made it possible to combine business with pleasure. Thanks to them, each meal took us on a journey to another land!

PRIDE

Apart from its agreeable and practical dimension, this help from Europe also confirmed that our activities and campaigns resonate with people from across the world. This inspires young people to cross oceans to support our

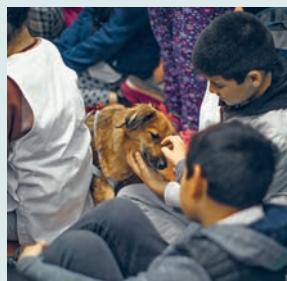
cause. Although our daily objective is to save endangered animals, our mission in the long term, is to have a lasting impact on society. Thus, Julian, Nadine and Vivianne's help is a way for us to appreciate the international reach of Equidad's work.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?

If, like Julian, Vivianne, and Nadine, you would like to enjoy a unique experience in Argentina and help animals, it takes just a few clicks – send us an email, and we will be happy to provide you with all the necessary information. We will do everything we can to integrate you into the team as smoothly as possible. In order to do that, we may even consider the possibility of extending the sanctuary!



EQUIDAD'S EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES



At Fondation Franz Weber, we are convinced that it is essential to educate the younger generations in order to create a more responsible and animal-friendly society. With that in mind, the team at the Equidad Animal Sanctuary has decided to launch a far-reaching campaign in rural areas of the region's schools. The primary objective is to raise awareness amongst children about animal welfare.

In rural Argentina, children are used to living with many animals (dogs, cats, chickens, horses, pigs, etc.), but they often consider animals only in terms of their use to humans. For most of them, animals' only purpose is to serve, feed, and protect humans, guarding the house, providing meat, milk, and eggs, carrying a rider, pulling a cart, and so on. This mentality explains the sad reality when our teams come across the countless numbers of severely abused animals. These animals are treated like «machines» – machines that are rarely given a name and for whom calling a vet is considered unnecessary. Why invest in a «machine» when it can be replaced at little cost?

In order to challenge this mentality, our team employs a powerful weapon: Vachi. A small dog full of life that we helped save after a road traffic accident. Vachi is paralysed but that does not prevent her from leading a proper dog's life! With her inexhaustible *joie de vivre*, she has moved children who have begun to see dogs in a different light. The «Vachi method» is very effective: some children tell us proudly that when they see an animal on the road they ask their parents to slow down. Apart from our mascot's activities, which attract a lot of attention, our presentations highlight the fundamental needs of various animals, the basic care they need to be provided with (like vaccinations etc.), and treating the physical and mental impact of abuse. As a result, children are gradually beginning to understand that animals are not only living beings that deserve respect, they are – above all – wonderful friends for life!

Fleur de Morat— The story of an impending environmental disaster



ANNA ZANGGER

Lawyer



There are places of timeless beauty that have been built by humankind in the distant past. There are towns and places that are a pleasure to behold. There are heritage sites that bear testimony to our history and have the power to move our hearts. Such an example is the old town of Morat/Murten, in the Canton of Fribourg in Switzerland. The roofs of the old town stand out against a hill in close proximity to the lake. It is a veritable jewel – a captivating place created by humankind that deserves to be preserved.

There are some who see things differently. In September 2017, real estate developers submitted a project to the Commune of Morat/Murten for the construction of nine residential rental buildings on parcel no. 5402, located just below the famous old town. These dreadful buildings would be a permanent blight on the townscape. As a result, Helvetia Nostra, supported by Fondation Franz Weber, are faced with no choice but to oppose this scandalous project.

THE PROJECT VIOLATES FEDERAL LAW

The construction project would not only deface this small town, but is, above all, in contravention of federal law. Indeed,

the Federal Office of Culture has gone on record to state the Swiss built heritage deserves to be preserved in the framework of the Federal Inventory of Swiss Heritage Sites (ISOS). The inventory lists sites that the cantons and communes, under federal law, must specifically preserve within the framework of their local laws. In the case of parcel no. 5402, ISOS states that it is essential to preserve the old town, and that to achieve this, a high level of protection to the unbuilt «buffer zone» be given. The buffer zone is located in the foreground and to the south of the old town, which happens to be the precise area of the planned building site. The ISOS even recommends a prohibi-

tion on building in this zone. However, the Morat town council and the Canton of Fribourg have chosen not to adhere to the rules of the ISOS in their building regulations – parcel no. 5402 is not protected and is simply located in a constructible zone. The Commune has therefore failed in its duty to protect Swiss heritage.

The parcel in question, which is currently unconstructed land, is immediately adjacent to the protected old town centre. This area of greenery, which provides a setting for the magnificent old town of Morat, should have been protected and even made non-constructible if the Commune



had correctly applied the ISOS rules and the principles of the Swiss Spatial Planning Law (Loi sur l'Aménagement du Territoire, LAT / Raumplanungsgesetz, RPG). The whole project therefore makes no sense to begin with.

Worse, this project is excessive, expansive, completely out of scale. It foresees the construction of nine modern apartment buildings – around 100 new apartments – in a town with just over 8,000 inhabitants and without any evidence of any real demand for additional primary residences.

CULTURAL HERITAGE RIDICULED

The planned buildings are inharmonious and massive. Their modern style, flat roofs, and the proposed construction materials are incompatible with the old facades and roofs of the town above. The communal building regulations specify that parcel no. 5402 must be completely integrated into the surrounding area, particularly with the old town.

The «Fleur de Morat» project is a misnomer. It is quite simply an affront to this beautiful town, the heritage, and the work of our ancestors. The reputation of Morat – «promoted» by Switzerland Tourism for its «authentic character», its «magnificent views», and «superb panorama view over the town»s roofs and the nearby lake» – is at stake. Switzerland Tourism's effusive descriptions would be rendered completely inappropriate by such a project.

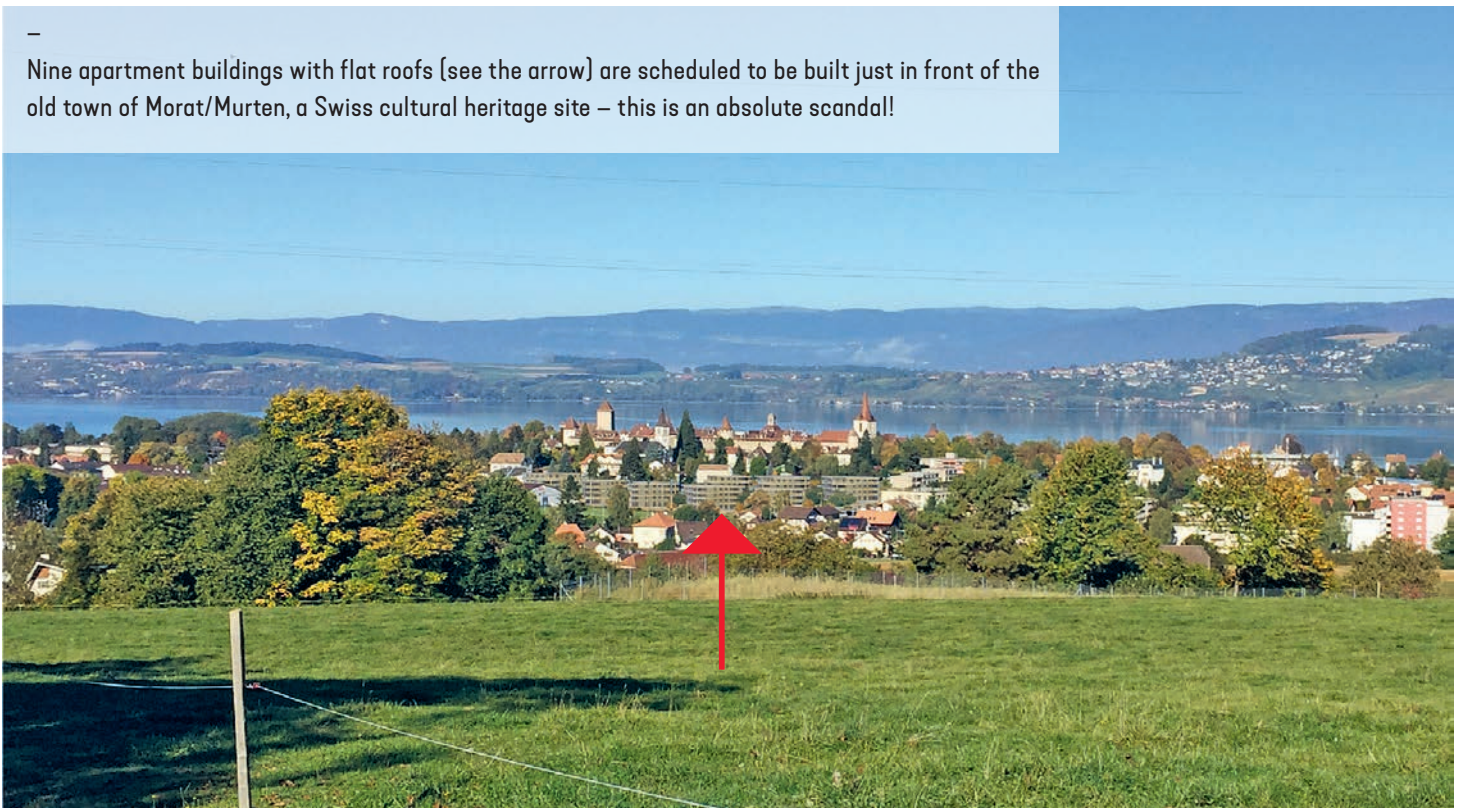
Birds are also threatened by the planned construction of the large residential buildings: the old town is a nesting site for jackdaws, a bird species that is protected and listed on the national list of priority bird species, compiled by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). Urban growth has forced jackdaws to travel ever greater distances to find high-protein food for their young. Consequently, the chicks are left alone in the nest

for too long, and die of cold. To avoid these long periods of absence, the birds are increasingly looking for food in the garbage in the town, which often lacks protein. It is therefore essential, for the survival of this species, that certain open spaces are preserved in the centre of the town, particularly near the nesting sites (the roofs of the château in Morat).

Following the many objections filed against the request for a building permit, including that of the Helvetia Nostra Association, the property developer has slightly modified the project, by reducing the size of one of the buildings. This is proof positive that this project conflicts with the protection of the site. Helvetia Nostra has of course confirmed its opposition to the project. The municipality, which has not yet reached a decision, will therefore have to take a decision, which may then be subject to appeals—it will be interesting to see how this plays out.



—
Nine apartment buildings with flat roofs (see the arrow) are scheduled to be built just in front of the old town of Morat/Murten, a Swiss cultural heritage site – this is an absolute scandal!



In memory of Franz Weber



Franz Weber (27 July 1927 – 2 April 2019) grew up in Basel as the third of seven siblings. At the age of 10, his beloved mother died, a blow that affected him throughout his whole life. In 1949, he traveled to Paris and lived there working as a writer and journalist. He interviewed contemporaries from the world of art, music and literature, such as Salvador Dalí, Eugène Ionesco, Charles Aznavour, Jacques Brel, Johnny Hallyday and Françoise Hardy. With Brigitte Bardot, he later campaigned against the slaughter of baby seals, and with the French President Georges Pompidou he fought to save Les Baux-de-Provence, FR. After studying linguistics and philosophy at Sorbonne, he traveled the world and wrote for different German and Swiss weekly newspapers and magazines. It was on one of these trips that he had his awakening: the idyllic hamlet of Surlej by Silvaplana in the Engadine valley was to be transformed into a town with 25,000 inhabitants. His outrage over this gigantic project turned Franz Weber into a committed environmentalist.

The «great lion» has gone to heaven. A precursor and visionary, he fought for more than fifty years to give a voice to the voiceless. But although the death of the founder and honorary president of Fondation Franz Weber – at the age of 91, on 2 April 2019 – has left an enormous void, his work is eternal. His countless projects, campaigns, and initiatives earned him worldwide recognition, and turned the flamboyant dispenser of justice from the Vaud region, who originated from Basel, into a veritable legend. From fighting against seal hunting in Canada to rescuing the Lavaux vineyard and the conservation of the ancient Greek site of Delphi, the protection of the alluvial forest on the Danube in Austria, and saving the Grandhotel Giessbach... wherever he intervened, he left his mark and made the world a better place.

Franz Weber – supported by his chief assistant and wife, Judith – was a pioneer and a leading nature conservation and animal welfare activist. Vera Weber, director of the initiative campaign launched by Franz Weber against secondary homes, which was adopted by the Swiss people and the cantons in 2012, has been devotedly managing Fondation Franz Weber since 2014. «The sacred fire of Franz Weber – his complete commitment to nature conservation, animal welfare, and the conservation of heritage – burns inside us, and burns inside me. Driven by his life's work, his many campaigns, and his extensive experience, Fondation Franz Weber is and remains an effective tool in the fight for a better world.»





Franz Weber – the death of a righteous man



Arika Lindbergh

Writer, painter, and naturalist

**A being of light has gone to eternity,
leaving us with an invaluable role model.**

For all those who followed the activities of this courageous leading light of nature conservation and animal welfare and those, in particular, who had the privilege of knowing him – not just Franz Weber the legend, but Franz, with

all his tremendous lucidity – his death has left a terrible void. Even for us, who know that death as he saw it was quite simply just a transition to everlasting peace, harmony, and rebirth – a life after life, as it were.

We still have the wonderful legacy of his struggles, his determination, and a watchword that sums up his character: «never give up!» Following his example meant refusing to submit to the pseudo-wisdom of those who are resigned,



—
Alika Lindbergh painted this portrait of Franz Weber for his 75th birthday, on 27 July 2002.

who tend to think that defending the GOOD, the TRUE, and the BEAUTIFUL is a utopia, a lost cause in this world. On the contrary, it means being convinced that the power of goodwill, courage, and stubbornness can produce real miracles. Did Franz Weber not demonstrate this on countless occasions?

It is our duty to take up the torch he left behind, carry the flag of the Earth Crusaders and universal empathy, and «go on crusades» as often as is necessary, in tribute to his memory.

Following in his footsteps and living according to his values of absolute generosity would be the best way – and the way most worthy of this righteous man – to mourn his death, and see stars shining once again in the immense void left by the fall of this great and honourable tree, the top of which defiantly reached beyond the canopy.

I remember the epic beginning of his career as an environmentalist and animal welfare activist. Although the good news that a «Swiss billionaire» was waging a war against the atrocious hunting of baby seals in Canada and was using his immense fortune to help animal martyrs the reality was quite different. Without boasting, Franz Weber mortgaged his house in order to effectively fund the first of his major campaigns to save baby seals – a campaign whose impact made him famous around the world...

Only much later did I learn this detail – which was so characteristic of Franz Weber's personality. It was long after he had supported the reintroduction of our howler monkeys into the Brazilian cerrado, and helped Scott Lindbergh, my husband, to implement the project successfully.

It was in fact quite by chance and in a joking way that Franz mentioned the mortgage. He told me that his reputation as a «billionaire», which had been cultivated, was a source of much amusement for him. This confidence did not fall on deaf ears and I was very impressed. These stories would often be the case! So, it was in this moment of sharing and amid much laughter that my unfailing friendship with Franz began, a reciprocal friendship that death has only temporarily interrupted.

During the thirty-six years of our friendship and collaboration, we kept in touch – by letter, fax, and above all long telephone conversations. In fact, we very rarely saw each other. Indeed, as we lived at some distance from one another – he lived in Switzerland and I in France – we did not have much of an opportunity to do so!



But that did not prevent us from getting to know each other very well and gradually viewed each other, not only as comrades in arms, but also as soul-mates, which was an honour for me.

The last time we saw each other was seven years ago, in June 2012. When his daughter Vera told me about his death, a vivid memory of him, dripping with rain, surged back into my mind. Imagine Franz and I, on a rainy afternoon, walking on the wet grass in my garden during a heavy rainfall. Thousands of drops of water hit thousands of leaves, making the trees rustle and sing in a wonderful way ... Anyone in such a situation in heavy rainfall would have expressed regret that a reunion of two old friends was taking place in such 'bad' weather. Anyone, but not him, not Franz! He was radiant (as the poet Van Lerberghe wrote: «Blackbirds, sing with all your might (...), dance every nest. All that comes from the skies is blest.»).

In my memory, I saw Franz, haloed in the pattering rain that was hitting his umbrella, which was dripping with water. He was smiling, absolutely radiant, and then said to me cheerfully, with his characteristic enthusiasm and positivity: «But ... it's great here! It's wonderful! WONDERFUL!!! Yes, we're going to save all that! Yes, we're going to do that!»

We were at the time in the lushest part of my garden, which with hard work I had restored (as one says about a work of art) and turned into a wild and natural place, where the flora and fauna in this region in the North of France, which have almost disappeared in much of the countryside due to the effects of human progress, were able to regain their freedom to flourish in blossoming biodiversity.

In just a few years, my 'garden' had become a veritable small nature reserve

and a refuge for an incredible variety of birds, wild mammals, amphibians, and rare butterflies – a real green paradise for naturalists.

Due to a set of circumstances that I will not go into here, I was afraid that I would have to abandon my house – and therefore my Garden of Eden – to the appalling irresponsibility of humans. I was not sure what was going to happen and feared the worse. Would there be a casual destruction of the greenery with trimmers, chainsaws, and other machines, after which the grass would be unable to grow back? What was going to happen to the mysterious nightjars? And the nightingales, bullfinches, tits, and sparrows, and all the other little passerines? And the adorable diurnal and nocturnal woodpeckers? Where in the future would the hares and wild cats, which have become so rare, and the pair of martens find refuge? And where would the foxes, squirrels, hedgehogs, and all the slow-worms and amphibians go when all the trees had been felled, the bushes removed, the brambles burnt, and ... the burrows discovered?

I wanted to share my distress in writing with the one person amongst my friends who would really understand me, and, above all, the only person who, preferring concrete action to facile statements of self-pity, would find a good solution to my problem. Indeed, Franz never gave any advice that was just hot air. That alone made him a truly exceptional man!

The day after he received my letter he came to see me in the Oise, saying with a big smile «We're going to do that!», which was worth more than any contract, because Franz was a man of his word and never made any empty promises. So he kept his promise, and I remained the guardian of a nature reserve in which everything owes its life to him.

I share this story with you – which is very moving for me – precisely because there is nothing spectacular about it, and because it is all the more significant in terms of who this unique man really was. My story pales into insignificance when compared with the countless impressive campaigns that have made the Franz Weber Foundation famous. But whether he was in a modest hamlet alone in the middle of nowhere, or facing a large crowd under the photographers' flashes, he was always the same. He was always seized with the same emotion when defending any moving cause. He was like a knight from a distant time, ready to come to the rescue of the oppressed, a legendary knight whose motto could have been «Heaven helps those who help themselves». Such was the conviction he had in his determination. This was combined with immanent divine justice.

Nature – that wonder of the world – was his cathedral. Helping people and animals, and saving natural environments was his *raison d'être* and his calling. He practised his religion of rescuing animals and natural sites with an ardent fervour, both with indignation and the passionate elan of an eternally youthful enthusiasm.

The suffering of any being – whether human or non-human – treated like an object by man and at his mercy was unbearable for him, as was the iconoclastic destruction of BEAUTY. As well as natural sites and works of art, and even values that underpin harmony... all that affected him. This knight firmly believed that GOOD must triumph over EVIL, and that the inverse was unacceptable.

The great detractors in our modern destructive age tried to disparage him by calling him innocent and naive – even paranoid! But for me, the fact that

he won so many improbable victories seems to justify the «candour» of this Galahad.

Franz did not accept that certain things were impossible... he simply did them! What is amazing is that he often won! He was a «Green», who was different from the others, because there was something that was akin to a sacred mission in his campaigns, and in his decision to live a difficult and self-sacrificial life.

It must be remembered that he initially led a completely different life. One that was rather pleasant and successful. He was a well-known journalist in his youth and – I can attest to this because I have read his books – a highly talented writer, who could have had a successful literary career. However, just as certain people who have been inspired leave the world and its trivialities to become a monk or a hermit, Franz suddenly abandoned a comfortable career that was mapped out to become a fighting monk, and live the life of a crusader, in order to save sacred Earth and its children from a very difficult life that could sometimes be a Golgotha...

That is why when I speak about him, I prefer to use the word «calling» rather than «vocation», and «crusade» rather than «campaign».

That is also why, when I try to imagine the number of animals and plants that were saved by all his crusades, I dare to write that he was a saintly man.

We should not forget the vulnerability and the extreme sensitivity that lay underneath his exterior, or the tenderness and astute observational and analytical abilities that were a part of his exceptional empathy. He never turned away from anything that upset him, even when it was unbearable.

In everything that has been written about him, whether it was malicious or complimentary, his great sensitivity was hardly mentioned, perhaps because he was unaware of his capacity to empathise (which could be considered a weakness, an Achilles heel...). Hence, he concealed it, or rather protected it behind the impassive face of a poker player. He was also too modest to let the world see his pain.

As his friend, I sometimes witnessed his heartbreak, when, after discovering another atrocity, he called me on the phone in shock to share for a moment his horror, pain, and anger in an emotional account, with a devastated voice, choked with tears...

When this moment passed, the crusader recovered and, gradually, his plaintive voice became stronger. «The power of nature» took over, and he soon began talking about what he was going to do to put an end to the abomination.

Indeed, you cannot skirt around the issue when it comes to things that break the heart like that. All it takes is a little detachment to arm oneself with the courage that is required to continu-

ally fight against despair, suffering, and indifference. Believe me, you have to be truly spirited to do that.

Throwing one's hands up in the air is not enough. One has to have tremendous courage and be completely committed. And, as matter of fact, many animal lovers, since they constantly have to deal with the martyrdom of animals and who are often ridiculed, have lost their joie de vivre and sometimes even their nervous or mental equilibrium.

I can hardly imagine what Franz must have felt when he saw baby seals being skinned alive in front of their mothers on the ice. That was enough to make you go insane. And yet, he did that. Whenever it was necessary, he faced HELL... . Then he overcame the shock, modestly concealed his pain without creating a fuss, and continued his crusade...

We are not the only ones who will miss you, dear Franz – the EARTH, where everything you have saved is now an «orphan», misses you too. Fortunately, when a star dies its light continues to shine for a thousand years.





A tribute to Franz Weber



KOMNEN BECIROVIC

Born in 1936 in Upper Morača, in Montenegro.

A writer living in Paris.



IF I HAD TO CHOOSE THREE OF FRANZ WEBER'S MOST NOBLE CAMPAIGNS...

I first met Franz Weber more than thirty years ago, under the auspices of Apollo, the god of the sun that dispenses light and heat and which has made it possible to live in this part of the universe occupied by planet Earth. Back in 1987, I had been very impressed by a documentary on French television

about his successful defence of the site of the Delphi sanctuary. As the region is rich in the mineral bauxite, the site was threatened by the polluting aluminium industry. This would have involved, amongst other devastating outcomes, felling several million olive trees – trees considered sacred, particularly in Athens, one of the cradles of Western civilisation.



—
Franz Weber and Komnen Becirovic in the magnificent canyon of Morača, which would have been engulfed in water if a hydraulic power station project had gone ahead.



I was particularly struck by this report because at that point there was another equally destructive and pressing project – the construction of hydraulic power stations – in the valley of the River Morača, in the eponymous region of central Montenegro. As was the case at Delphi, the project threatened to wipe out a rich natural and cultural heritage. The deluge would also have engulfed the canyons of the Morača River and its tributaries, which are tens of millions of years old, the unique endemic plants and the grottos where prehistoric men lived one hundred and twenty thousand years ago. Furthermore, the region's most important site, the great medieval Church of the Assumption of the Mother of God dating from 1252, renowned worldwide for its architecture and wall paintings – particularly the fresco of St Elijah in the Desert – was threatened by a project to create an artificial lake that would have come up to its walls.

Utterly dismayed by these imminent threats to my country's heritage, I joined a large movement that was contesting the projects. Buoyed by his actions, I decided to write to Franz Weber, soliciting his help to save Morača. And, as a similar project – even though it was slightly less developed – was already underway, I decided to tell him about this one as well. This project concerned another major Serbian sanctuary on the site of the monastery at Studenica, on the eponymous river in southern Serbia. The site was constructed half a century before that of Morača! In his prompt reply to my letter, Franz Weber explained to me that he needed to visit the sites he was asked to intervene on before taking a decision.

«THE CATHEDRAL OF ETERNITY»

So, on one fine day in April 1988 – while I was living at the time between Paris and Podgorica – I met Franz Weber. He had arrived in Montenegro's capital and

we wasted no time at all. The following day, we made our way down the path that runs along the Valley of Morača, we soon reached its magnificent canyon. Standing amidst the towering cliffs, Franz Weber, who was enthralled with the scenery, exclaimed: «Here we are in the cathedral of eternity». And as the river, with its rolling white-emerald waves swollen by melted snow, invaded the canyon with its music, he added, visibly moved: «It's like a Beethoven symphony!»

Shortly after, as we left the canyon, we beheld a white building on an alluvial terrace overhanging the river. Like a ship stranded many centuries ago, the Church of the Assumption of the Mother of God stood before us. The miracle of nature had been followed by the miracle of civilisation. And as we stood beneath its vaults, he declared, with an almost religious gravity: «Prayer engraved in stone.»

—
The valley of the River Morača, in central Montenegro, was saved thanks to Franz Weber's campaign.





We spent the rest of the day – one of the most memorable days of my life – together, and eventually we reached Studenica. There, the monks were very welcoming. The central church houses the famous fresco of The Crucifixion at Studenica, which predates Giotto's work.

After this initial meeting, Franz Weber returned again at the end of June, this time accompanied by a group of journalists from various European media outlets, amongst whom was Roger Cans, the editor of *Le Monde's* ecology section. He devoted a whole page to the two affairs. During his stay, Franz Weber had a very friendly encounter with the future Metropolitan of Montenegro, Monseigneur Amphilochie, who, like me, was a native of the region.

This succeeding campaign was providential. It introduced an international dimension to the issue of Morača and Studenica, resulting in applications for the two buildings to join the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. However, the Yugoslavian crisis that erupted shortly after delayed the addition of Morača, while Studenica was added just in time. In fact, it was during the outbreak of the Yugoslavian crisis, which culminated in NATO's attack on Serbia in 1999 in order to seize the sacred land of Kosovo (Serbia's «Jerusalem»), that Franz Weber decided to take up another cause. He fought against the criminal war that ravaged populations, destroyed human and material property, as well as cultural monuments, and those which even polluted nature with toxic materials, such as NATO's depleted uranium bombs.

POLITICAL COURAGE

Looking beyond the political and media-based anti-Serb delirium incubated by the war, Franz Weber had travelled to Serbia a year earlier in

June 1998, with a group of journalists. They visited Kosovo that houses many extraordinary medieval monuments, such as those at Pec, Dečani, and Gračanica. Unfortunately, his voice – as well as those of other Western figures with a sense of justice and conscience – was ignored. It was right in the middle of the deadly war. Franz Weber sent an open letter to the American president Bill Clinton, the main protagonist of the war, in which he implored him to put an end to the murderous insanity. At the same time, between 18 and 20 May 1999, he organised an international conference in Giessbach against the war.

So great was the moral support of Franz Weber's involvement for our people that the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church awarded him the highest national decoration. As a result, he received the Award of the Order of Saint Sava directly from the Metropolitan Amphilochie inside the Morača Monastery, on the day of the Feast of the Assumption, on 28 August 2004. The award of this prestigious distinction was loudly hailed by an immense crowd, which was present because it was the day of the Sabor, the traditional meeting held by the inhabitants of Morača and the neighbouring region of Rovca.

During this meeting the issue was naturally raised again about the preservation of Morača. The dictatorial regime of Montenegro had not only done nothing to support its application to UNESCO, but instead had resumed the previously abandoned project of the submersion of the valley of Morača. The situation required urgent action. I have written about this campaign in my books, such as *L'éternité Menacée de la Moratcha* («The Endangered Eternity of Morača»), which was published in French in 1998, *Défense de la Mor-*

atcha contre le déluge («Defense of the Morača against the Deluge») in 2002, *Le spectre du déluge sur la Moratcha* («The Spectre of the Deluge in Morača») in 2010, and lastly, *Le combat pour la sauvegarde de la Moratcha* («The Battle for the Rescue of the Morača») in 2017, in which Franz Weber played a key role. An anecdote beautifully illustrates his prestige in the Serbian community. During the presentation of my most recent work on 12 November 2017 in the

—
As a result of Franz Weber's campaign, the Church of the Studenica Monastery was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites.



vast room of the Temple of the Resurrection in Podgorica, the Metropolitan Amphilochie, who was attending the event, spoke of Franz Weber's role in preserving the heritage of Morača. Arousing the admiration and elation of the crowd, the mention of his name was greeted with a long round of applause.

ETERNAL RECOGNITION

At the time, our fellow activist was already suffering from health problems

and was staying in a home for the elderly. Yet, each time we talked on the phone in which it did not take him long to remember who I was, he asked me if there was any news about Morača. This community that he had so steadfastly supported had not forgotten him. On the 2nd April, he departed from this world, whose integrity he had defended with such commitment. I wrote an obituary about him that was published in an important Serbian site, and there

were many touching reactions. Indeed, during the assembly of the Moračani Association, on 11 May, in Morača Monastery, a glowing tribute was paid to him during the session. During the service, a large candle was lit, and praises were sung to his eternal memory and in his honour. The immemorial melody of Morača would accompany him on his journey into the next world.

Paris, 30 May 2019.





VERA WEBER

President of Fondation Franz Weber

«The word «impossible» is not French».

Franz Weber's legacy

«You will only take with you what you have given.» This was the only advice my father, Franz Weber, ever gave me. I have wholly adopted this piece of advice, as simple as it may sound.

But my father, the brilliant rebel – the great lion – who fought to preserve nature and animals, has passed away, taking with him as much as he left behind in this world. With determination, fearlessness, and without compromise, my father was committed to creating a world worthy of living in. He did so by attempting to preserve the beauty of nature from concrete and cultural monuments from the ravages of time. From rescuing the village of Surlej on the shore of Lake Silvaplana in Engadin, where he discovered his vocation as an environmentalist, to preventing the construction of a motorway slip road through the gardens in Lausanne-Ouchy, and the conservation of the Grandhotel Giessbach on Lake Brienz, his campaigns have left an indelible mark on the world.

And his tenacity revolutionised ways of thinking, leading to a change in values. He always succeeded, even when all seemed lost, in finding new

ways to save animals, natural environments and the cultural heritage. With arousing enthusiasm, he knew how to convince people and inspire many to join his cause. All those who called upon him for help, worked with him and supported him were struck by his fighting spirit, which was driven by his almighty rage against injustice and also by his self-confidence. His daughter was struck by it too.

My father lived in Paris for many years, which may explain why Napoleon's inspiring proverb, «The word «impossible» is not French», became his motto for life. As a child, it gave me absolute certainty that my father would always sort everything out, that nothing was impossible and that he could literally move mountains. This was the atmosphere I grew up in. For me, my father was the greatest of heroes and my existence as his only child was completely secure. I knew nothing would happen to him, my mother, or me.

However, life outside the harmonious family home was not easy. In the school at Montreux, my classmates were often cold, and sometimes quite unpleasant towards me. Many parents did not want

their children to become friends with a little girl whose father attracted so much attention, who waged vigorous campaigns against real estate developers, who spoke out unequivocally against animal experimentation and the massacre of baby seals, amongst other atrocities. Birthdays and New Year's Eves were therefore often solitary affairs. Often, I was alone, alone in the house while my parents worked all day, seven days a week seemingly ad infinitum.

Although I was a solitary child, I was not unhappy because I knew that my parents took me seriously. My mother always explained to me in great detail about the various campaigns they were conducting and the initiatives they were launching. So, I was truly proud – and I never stopped being proud – to be the daughter of Franz Weber.

My father was afraid of nothing, which enabled him to act with incredible determination. He had charm and charisma, which made him exceptionally persuasive.

He knew how to find the right words, in speeches or in writing, in order to formulate simple and passionate mes-

sages. These went straight to the heart because they were perfectly formulated and convincing.

He was better than anyone else at getting the media to be interested in animals and nature. And he had such ingenious ideas! When the historical Hotel Giessbach at Lake Brienz was threatened with demolition and the lawyer Rudolf von Fischer in Bern asked for his help, he conceived virtually overnight the campaign and the slogan that would save Giessbach: «Giessbach au peuple suisse!» («Giessbach for the Swiss People»). The Swiss people should treat themselves to a Grandhotel. What a fascinating and inspirational idea! Today, the sumptuous Grandhotel Giessbach stands in its intact natural setting and has become the symbol of the protection and conservation of other historical sites.

For me, Giessbach was a revelation – and a form of salvation, too. The only child was suddenly part of a team. I could contribute and get involved, helping out in the kitchen and the linen room. It also gave me a way, during the difficult teenage years, of distancing myself from my all-powerful father, with his omnipresent campaigns and struggles. Giessbach also played a part in my choice of profession, because I graduated from the École Hôtelière (SHL) in Lucerne.

But, in May 1999, twenty years ago, as I was proudly receiving my diploma, it suddenly dawned on me that I could not go ahead with my career in the hotel trade. The call of – or rather the need to protect – nature and animals was too strong to resist.

This is why I returned to Montreux and immersed myself body and soul in working for the foundation. My mother was delighted to have her child back at her

side and to be able to depend on a young and dynamic fellow activist. My father, though, did not know how to react.

On the one hand, he was worried about me choosing to pursue a passionate but difficult existence and, on the other, he seemed to be bothered by the idea that I might slightly put him in the shade ...

The campaigns continued in quick succession. Franz Weber fought to save the monasteries of Kosovo that were threatened with destruction by the war; peace would have been the best solution, but history decided otherwise ...

In Australia, thousands of wild horses were living in the foundation's reserve. The initiative «Les animaux ne sont pas des choses» («Animals are not things») was launched. The required signatures were collected, and after the modification of the law for the protection of animals that gave them a better legal situation – unfortunately without the benefit of an animal lawyer – it was withdrawn.

Franz Weber launched two other popular initiatives on the federal level, one to protect forests, the other against the noise of fighter aircraft in tourist areas. A second cantonal initiative specifically aimed at protecting the Lavaux vineyards in Switzerland, which was accepted by an overwhelming majority of the citizens of the canton of Vaud. He also launched two initiatives to protect the Swiss territory, the initiative on secondary homes being one of them. Practically day and night my father could count on my mother, on me, and on a small but highly effective team of committed activists.

Franz Weber was a driven man who was motivated by his love for his homeland and by the beauty of the Swiss landscapes and cultural heritage. As he often said, if he did not do everything

in his power to preserve the beauty of nature and the animals that were part of it, it would be a form of desertion. His aim was to preserve the world we inhabit, or more precisely, the world we share with other living beings. In my mother, Judith Weber, he had found the perfect partner to conduct these campaigns. The success of the couple formed by Franz and Judith Weber confirms yet again that behind every successful man is a successful woman. Without Judith Weber's support, many things would not have succeeded.

And without her, I could not have continued to work with Franz Weber. That is because it was not easy to be his daughter. Although we were always – on a fundamental level – in agreement about an issue we on occasion disagreed on how to proceed, and that resulted in heated debate. This father-daughter contretemps reached its peak in the Weber household after the adoption of the initiative on secondary homes on 11 March 2012. I was deeply hurt when my father declared that the outcome would have been better if he had conceived and directed the referendum campaign all by himself. That was the last straw and I decided to leave. And yet I ended up staying, in spite of my father. I did not stay for him, but rather for the cause he was fighting for and for my mother's sake. Two and a half years later, in 2014, he handed me complete control of the campaigns to which he had devoted fifty years of his life. It marked the veritable beginning of our father-daughter relationship.

Today, at the «grand age» of forty-four, when I look back, and after telling my «Papili» that I loved him for the last time on 2 April, I realise that Franz Weber's «school», as tough as it was, set me up for life. I am ready to take up many other causes for animals and nature. *Merci, Papili!*



AZB
CH-8472 Seuzach
PP/Journal

JOURNAL FRANZ WEBER

DIE POST 

Returns to: Dataserv, Aspstrasse 12, 8472 Seuzach



FONDATION
FRANZ
WEBER

PROTECT WILDLIFE AND NATURE

as benefactor
of FONDATION FRANZ WEBER

Franz Weber Territory, Australia

With your help, Fondation Franz Weber can continue to move mountains for wildlife, nature and local landscapes.

As benefactor, your contribution provides lasting support for our campaigns and actions towards a world worth living in. Fondation Franz Weber will keep you regularly updated about ongoing work and projects.

*On behalf of wildlife and nature:
Heartfelt thanks for your support.*

DONATIONS ACCOUNT

Postal cheque account no.: 18-6117-3
IBAN: CH31 0900 0000 1800 6117 3

FONDATION FRANZ WEBER

P.O. Box 257, 3000 Berne 13
T +41 (0)21 964 24 24
ffw@ffw.ch | www.ffw.ch/en