

## Kenya Wildlife Chief Ousted

To the dismay of many conservationists, David Western, the embattled director of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), was abruptly sacked by Kenya President Daniel arap Moi on 21 May. Hours later, the European Community decided to freeze some \$3 million that had been committed to help keep the foundering KWS operating. The episode "sets Kenya wildlife back 10 years," says David Woodruff, a conservation geneticist at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD).

Western was given no reason for his dismissal, but said at a press conference that he was dropped in part because he resisted pressure from government officials to allow mining in the parks.

The firing occurs against a background of policy disputes

that supporters of Western tie to former KWS leader Richard Leakey, a rival of Western's who is now an opposition member of the Kenyan parliament. After Leakey was forced out as KWS chief in 1994, Western took over, promoting a controversial new policy of "community-based conservation," based on the idea that conservation depends on the involvement of people beyond the park system (*Science*, 24 April, p. 510). He also struggled with KWS's financial crisis, exacerbated by a decline in tourism and donor support. "People in the West see this experiment as incredibly important," says Charis Cussins of UCSD, who does research on democracy in Kenya. But critics, she says, perceived it as neglecting parks and "putting money down a sinkhole."

Supporters of Western see



**Political target.** Ecologist David Western, who was fired by Kenya President Daniel arap Moi.

the sacking as the outcome of months of subversive activity by Leakey and his allies, including derogatory stories about Western in the Kenyan press and pumped-up reports of elephant poaching. Peter Raven, head of the Missouri Botanical Garden, and other conservationists claim that criticisms of Western reported in the *Science* News story helped tip the balance against him. Some conser-

vationists view the *Science* piece as part of a campaign by Leakey. Floyd Bloom, *Science* editor-in-chief, denies that the magazine was influenced by Leakey.

Leakey himself, in an e-mail to *Science*, labeled the charge that he

has orchestrated a campaign against Western as "utter nonsense." He "was sacked by the government of Kenya, and ... I have no influence whatsoever with this group," he wrote. Raven, meanwhile, says, "I have rarely seen such a bad case of politics ... driving down a very good man who is practicing the very best in modern conservation biology."

## G8 Backs Malaria Effort

A new antimalaria initiative announced earlier this month by the World Health Organization (WHO) got a promise of top-level support from world leaders attending last week's G8 economic summit in Birmingham, U.K. And U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair, making the first monetary offer of aid, pledged \$100 million from the U.K.'s international development department for the initiative.

The new program, Roll Back Malaria, is a priority of WHO's new director-general, Gro Harlem Brundtland, whose goal is to halve world deaths from malaria by 2010. The WHO plan aims to coordinate a number of research and control activities, including the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria, which involves 37 African countries, the United States, and Europe, and the African Initiative on Malaria, which brings together governments, the World Bank, and other international agencies. Malaria now causes about 500 million cases of illness and 1 million deaths a year worldwide, as the

parasite develops increasing resistance to drugs and spreads into new regions such as Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

The leaders of Roll Back Malaria are banking on further funds. "We hope the G8 support will translate into a real increase in financial commitment," not only from the G8 countries but from other concerned govern-

ments, says Mary Galinski, president of the Malaria Foundation International in New York.

## NSF Tries Assessing School Reform Again

The National Science Foundation (NSF) wants researchers to evaluate its K-12 education reform program—again. A call for proposals has gone out to exam-

### Raising the Quota on Foreign Scientists

Legislation that would lift the ceiling for foreign scientists in the United States passed the Senate last week, raising U.S. universities' hopes that a bill will make it through Congress and be signed by the president before fall. The measure, H.R. 3736, raises the cap on H-1B visas, which allow skilled workers into the U.S. for up to 6 years. The current allowance of 65,000 a year was reached in early May.

Increasing the quota on these visas is critical, says Richard Lariviere, associate vice president for international programs at the University of Texas, Austin, which has more than 400 researchers with H-1B visas. "These caps are reached earlier and earlier each year," Lariviere says, adding that if schools have to wait for the next fiscal year's quota to kick in in October, they will have difficulty preparing for the academic year.

Both the House and Senate versions of the bill call for raising the cap to 95,000 for this fiscal year. But differences remain to be resolved, and universities favor the Senate's approach. The House version is more intrusive: For example, it would prevent universities from obtaining H-1B visas for new workers if they had previously let researchers go when a grant expired. The House bill is expected to come to a vote in June.

ine its 7-year-old Statewide Systemic Initiatives Program before the ink is even dry on a \$4.6 million evaluation by SRI International of Menlo Park, California.

SRI's Andrew Zucker says he's "puzzled that NSF would turn around and ask for more" while his report is still under review. National Science Board staffer Daryl Chubin, who as head of NSF's evaluation division held a February meeting to discuss a new assessment, says NSF's action does not necessarily imply criticism of SRI: "Since NSF approved the design, it shares responsibility for the results." He adds, "It's always difficult to evaluate a program still in flux."

The SRI report, parts of which have been released ([www.sri.com/policy/cehs/edpolicy.html](http://www.sri.com/policy/cehs/edpolicy.html)), includes case studies of 12 of the 26 states in the \$283 million program. But knowledgeable researchers say it fails to offer broader conclusions about the impact of the reforms on student achievement and other issues.

So the agency is taking another stab at it and has set a 1 July deadline for proposals.