Fourth International Congress on Fungal Conservation
Cotonou (Benin), 3–7 November 2025



This Congress of the *International Society for Fungal Conservation* [**ISFC**, www.fungal-conservation.org] is being hosted and organized by the *Research Unit for Tropical Mycology and Plant-Soil Fungi Interactions* [**MyTIPS**, https://fc-ssa.org] of the *University of Parakou* (Benin), with support from the *British Mycological Society*, *Cybertruffle*, the *Darwin Initiative*, *Fundación Fungi*, the *IUCN*, and the *Mohammed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund*.

Previous Congresses in this series were organized when fungal conservation was a new and, for many, unfamiliar idea. That has all changed. The challenge is now to plan a future where fungi are firmly placed in conservation's mainstream. It is a time of opportunity. The Congress theme, "Mainstreaming fungal conservation", is universally relevant to nature conservation. It targets not just fungal conservationists, but also people and organizations needing information about conservation, diversity and use of fungi, or looking for experts to help incorporate fungi in their conservation strategies.

The Congress aims to be a platform for collaboration, exchange and innovation, where participants can share their knowledge, present research and discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with conservation of fungi and their habitats.
It also aims to raise public awareness of the crucial importance of fungi in preserving biodiversity, while promoting sustainable, environmentally-friendly practices.

The African dimension of this Congress is of paramount importance. Africa, rich in biodiversity but facing numerous environmental challenges, has a key role to play in conserving fungi and their ecosystems. By placing particular emphasis on African participants, we hope to encourage local research, build capacity and foster regional collaboration for effective and sustainable conservation of fungi in Africa.



Baobab (Adansonia digitata), the iconic tree of African savannahs

The Congress includes capacity building for young conservationists via three parallel workshops, together with plenary and parallel sessions for speakers, and expert discussion panels. There will also be a general meeting of the **ISFC**. The workshop titles are: *MAGIC: mushrooms and gender in conservation* (with particular interest in traditional wild-harvesting in Africa of edible and medicinal fungi), *Red-listing of Meliola species* (exploring the possibility of automated evaluations using computers) and *Red-listing Termitomyces species* (with a focus on African species).



Termitomyces schimperi, Benin National Fungus (© A De Kesel)



Termitomyces letestui, Ouémé Supérieur Reserve Forest, Benin (© NS Yorou)

Plenary and parallel sessions will include talks on a wide range of fungal conservation topics, including citizen science, development of the global strategy for fungal conservation, fund-raising for fungal conservation, the role of education, sustainable uses and livelihoods, threats to fungi, and ways to approach, raise awareness and engender change in organizations relevant to fungal conservation. Expert panels will particularly explore how best to incorporate fungi in CBD national action plans, reports and strategies. The Congress aims to conclude with a “Cotonou Declaration on Fungal Conservation”, reflecting progress since the Cordoba Declaration “Fungi of the Earth” of 2007 [www.cybertruffle.org.uk/whitbymycosynod/decofcor.pdf].



Ramaria sinsinii from Pobè dense Forest, Benin (© NS Yorou)

Two post-congress excursions are planned. For participants, they will be an enriching and memorable experience, and an opportunity to celebrate the art and traditions associated with fungi in Sub-Saharan communities through field visits and cultural activities.

We are delighted to invite you to latest Congress in the world's only global series of meetings exclusively and explicitly dedicated to protecting fungi and, excitingly, the first to be held in Africa.



Traditional castle in the Somba region, built from mud (© NS Yorou)

You can be part of this historic event. For more information, please visit the Congress website [www.fungal-conservation.org/icfc4].

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