WILDERNESS SAFARIS WILDLIFE TRUST

February 2009

WILDERNESS
WILDLIFE TRUST

About the Trust

The Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust seeks to make a difference in Africa, to its wildlife and its people. These projects address the needs of existing wildlife populations, seek solutions to save threatened species and provide education and training for local people and their communities.

Since its formation, the Trust has supported a wide variety of wildlife management, research and education projects in southern Africa, making use of a number of methods and types of projects to do so.

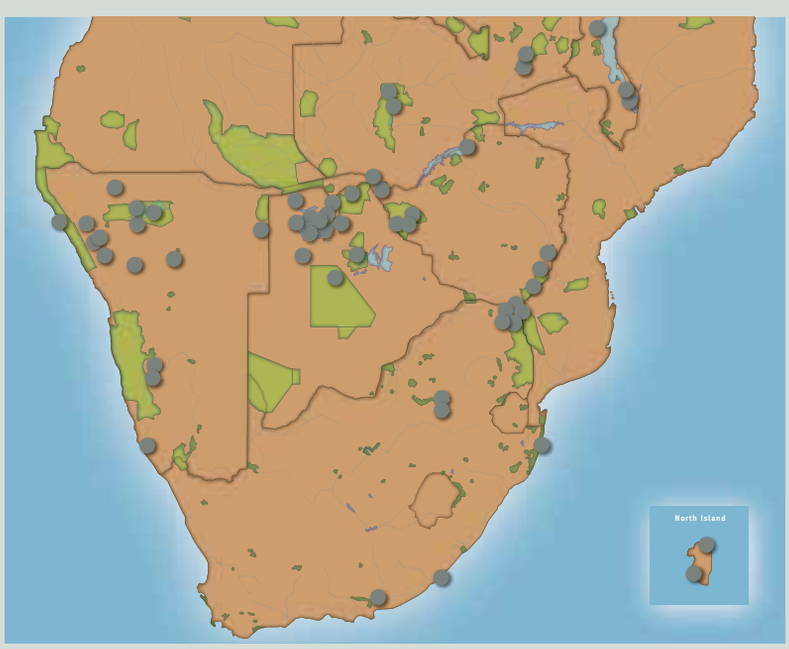
One kind of project studies and monitors a particular species in its natural environment and in so doing also contributes to its protection. The long-running Maputaland Turtle Project in South Africa, the Namib Brown Hyaena Project and the Namibian Desert Elephant and Giraffe Project are cases in point. Moving beyond research into hands-on management is another variation on this theme.

Study of a species sounds like a purely academic pursuit, but within such investigation lie the seeds for its protection and survival. The better we understand a species and its environment, the more efficiently we'll be able to protect it in a world where the struggle for space becomes paramount and human-animal interactions become increasingly conflicted. Most of the Trust's projects have this as an ultimate objective and some amazing headway has been made, for example in the Lake Ngami Bird Monitoring Project, which brought the Lake and this Important Bird Area (IBA) to the attention of the Botswana government, resulting in its being declared a "no-hunting area."

The Trust is involved financially in a number of such projects, supporting research, habitat management, and practical conservation measures such as anti-poaching projects, while Wilderness Safaris contributes logistically in terms of human resources and equipment.

But conservation of flora and fauna is limited as long as the people who live in the vicinity are unconvinced or left out of the process. Financial and educational empowerment of local communities so that they benefit from the wildlife on their doorsteps is therefore vital, and as such, broad-based and comprehensive initiatives are in fact the bedrock of the Trust, providing skills, knowledge and education necessary to communities to value and manage their wildlife populations.

Wilderness Safaris is acknowledged as a leader in the educational process thanks to its innovative formal and informal education projects, supported by the Trust in the form of grants and bursaries. The Children in the Wilderness programme aims to educate the youth of Africa, inspiring and assisting them to preserve their magnificent natural heritage.



Trust projects accross Southern Africa 2008

From the Trustees

Over the last 20 years, the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust has dedicated funds to improving protection, knowledge and management of Southern Africa's wildlife – from the rare and endangered to the inconspicuous and understudied. Our central aim has always been, and continues to be, the long-term conservation of Africa's rich natural heritage. Looking ahead, we recognise the need to move away from a crisis-driven conservation pursuit to one that plans for the future. For the upcoming year (2009), we are introducing a structure to our funding that will improve the channelling of funds to three critical areas of conservation and which will enable a more strategic approach to our endeavours in southern Africa:

- Research and Conservation
- Community Empowerment and Education
- Anti-Poaching and Management

Research and Conservation projects funded over 2008 through the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust have reflected the movement of conservation programmes in Africa to increasingly holistic approaches. Projects that have laid foundations for conservation awareness include the Education for Predator Conservation programme in Botswana, the Namibian Black Rhino Monitor Training Project and a leopard population dynamics survey in Zimbabwe. Investigations have also concentrated on transboundary movements, migration corridors and also human-animal conflict. Investigations into the complex interactions between large mammals, vegetation and climate changes as well as aerial censuses of herbivore communities in Malawi, Botswana and Namibia have also paved the way for better informed conservation management decisions.

Endangered species have also long been a focus of the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust and in 2008 several rhino relocation and research projects were funded in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Other herbivore research projects focused on genetic work on the Thornicroft's giraffe and the ecology of declining grazers in the Okavango Delta while carnivores such as wild dog, cheetah, brown hyaena and black mongoose also received attention. Projects investigating blue cranes in Namibia and two sea turtle species in South Africa also received funding.

A major component of **Community Empowerment and Education** projects has been our Educational Bursaries which have taken a significant step forward with the creation of bursaries for students at several South African universities. Projects such as the long-running Children in the Wilderness and Zambia's Simonga Village also continue to go from strength to strength while in **Anti-poaching and Management** critical projects in Zimbabwe and Zambia continue to achieve far reaching effects.

All of the projects funded through the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust are the result of many generous donations from people who have recognised the need for wildlife conservation and the empowerment of Africa's people. We extend a heartfelt thank you to all who have contributed to the Trust.

Further thanks go to the people who have ensured the smooth running of the Trust, from Amos Eno and Laura Mass at Resources First Foundation, to Chris Roche, Ilana Stein, Ulrike van der Hoven, Richard van der Wel and Grant Wolpert from Wilderness Safaris, to several organisations who have donated services such as Colorpress, Horwath, Leveton Boner, and Bell Dewar Hall. Without the dedication of these people and organisations, the Trust would not have achieved all that it has in 2008.

Lastly, to all of the dedicated conservation scientists and practitioners who have worked hard to preserve Africa's natural heritage, we are all indebted to your commitment and actions.

The Trustees
Russel Friedman, Andrew Leontsinis & Jennifer Lalley

Contents

WILDERNESS SAFARIS WILDLIFE TRUST

Contents

Botswana Rhino Relocation and Reintroduction Project

Coordinators: Map Ives & Kai Collins

The Botswana Rhino Reintroduction Project is a true success story: collaborative conservation efforts between Wilderness Safaris, Wilderness Safaris Wilderness Trust, Botswana's Department of Wildlife (DWNP) and the Botswana Government have realised the ideal of the successful reintroduction of black and white rhino into the Mombo area of the Moremi Game Reserve.

This past year has been extremely successful with the birth of four new white rhino calves with a total of 19 calves born to date (the first was born in 2004). They are all doing well and are monitored regularly.

The second Mombo Rhino Patrol Vehicle – purchased to enable following up on rhino sighting reports in other areas of the Okavango Delta – has proved to be invaluable. Rhino that have not been seen in a long time and are in very remote and inaccessible areas can now be located. Mpho 'Poster' Malongwa continues to monitor the rhino in the Mombo area (Chief's Island) daily, sometimes tracking and searching for rhino for up to 12 hours per day. He also periodically conducts rhino patrols in other parts of the Okavango Delta in collaboration with DWNP's Anti Poaching Unit. The Rhino Project has recently been joined by Njunja 'George' James who assists Poster on the daily rhino monitoring patrols.

A female white rhino and her sub-adult daughter had moved approximately 250km from Mombo to an area close the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. They seemed happily settled in this new area, so arrangements were made to bring in a rhino bull from Kgama Rhino Sanctuary to join them. The three have been spending lots of time together – good news for a new happy family.

The project is currently focusing most of its attention on raising funds in order to bring in a healthy supplementary population of black rhino, most likely from Zimbabwe. The resounding success of the reintroduction of white rhino means that efforts can now being put into building a viable population of black rhino that can begin re-expanding into parts of Botswana where many years ago they once roamed.

Ecology of Black and White Rhino in the Okavango Delta

Researcher: Pelotshweu Galebotswe

Since 2001, when Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) with the help of Wilderness Safaris and the Trust successfully reintroduced a number of black and white rhino into the Moremi Game Reserve, both species dispersed widely. In an attempt to better understand the ecology of the two species, this project has been investigating the wet and dry season range and feeding preferences of the reintroduced animals in the Moremi and surrounds. Identifying key factors influencing the movement of the rhino out of the habitat they were reintroduced into is essential from a management perspective.

Field work commenced in April 2008, making use of GPS data recorded by the Anti-Poaching Unit during regular monitoring patrols, by using spoor or visual identification. Dry season data was collected for two weeks per month from April through October, tracking 14 individual animals. This will be combined with data collected in the wet season to establish whether there is any preference for a particular habitat type per season.

In the dry season, it was found that rhino distributions were influenced by water availability and that the rhino foraged on seven primary grass species, namely: *Cynodon dactylon*, *Urochloa spp*, *Chloris virgata*, *Digitaria eriantha*, *Brancychne spp*, *Panicum maximum and Eragrostis spp*.

Movement-wise, nine rhino had left the study area, five of which were captured and returned to the safety of Moremi Game Reserve. There are currently two territorial adult male rhinos with well defended territories that overlap slightly. The dominant adult male is defending a large territory and has a number of females and five calves therein. The second male is defending a smaller territory with only two females present.

The white rhino population in this study are free-ranging animals that therefore display an unrestricted, natural dispersal, better allowing an understanding of home range size, habitat use and feeding preference in the wild. Additionally, the long-term benefits of establishing a successful breeding nucleus of white rhino in an area they once occupied will allow for future reintroductions into other suitable areas.

Hwange White Rhino Reintroduction

Coordinator: Verity Bowman

Following the release of five white rhino from Matobo National Park into Hwange National Park in July 2007, a further three rhino were introduced to Hwange from Matobo in late September 2008: two new cows and one bull. These animals have joined the small existing population and monitoring patrols and systems have been implemented to keep track of their movements.

The white rhino population of Hwange National Park, almost locally extinct in the early 1990s from poaching, has been increased through a number of translocations of animals from Matobo over the years. This national park has an overabundance of white rhino in a relatively small area, resulting in deaths from fighting and rhino moving out of the protected area. It has therefore proved an excellent resource for additional animals needed in Hwange, thus ensuring the viability of this population and providing another pool of the species in Zimbabwe.

To date, eight white rhino were moved from Matobo to Hwange; the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust funded the bomas built to house the white rhino when they arrived. Together with the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Wilderness Safaris is involved in the boma management and in long-term monitoring of the white rhino population in south-eastern Hwange.

Monitoring methods include radio-tracking using radio-telemetry techniques, from the air, on foot or by vehicle.

Namibia Black Rhino Monitor Training Project

Coordinator: Pierre du Preez

Black rhino populations that have been established on either private land or communal conservancies under the Black Rhino Custodianship Programme (BRCP) in Namibia require constant monitoring and protection if they are to be successful. A critical gap in the BRCP has been the availability of trained, competent and dedicated field monitors to record the daily progress and to protect these sub-populations.

The Ministry of the Environment (MET) and Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) have identified this gap and have agreed that the solution lies in selecting suitable candidates from the custodian communities and landowners, having SRT / MET train these monitors in the field, deploying the trained monitors with suitable equipment, and following up by MET and SRT in the communal conservancies and on private land.

The first phase involves selecting those suitable for deployment, identifying candidates with leadership potential and providing basic training. SRT, MET, the respective communal conservancy committees and private landowners will select participants for the first training course, which will be run by MET and SRT at Otjovasando in Etosha National Park, and managed by staff from both. The area has sufficient rhino for the animals be easily located, and has a population of other 'dangerous' species, namely elephant and lion.

The course currently used and being refined by SRT will then serve as a follow-up after assessment of the candidate monitors' performance in the field. The training team will also be involved with translocations of rhino as part of the Custodianship Programme.

In addition, professional surveillance and protection of black rhino populations in the communal conservancies will mean greater accessibility to the animals by guided tourists and less conflict between the rhino and members of the community. Ultimately trained monitors will ensure greater on-the-ground protection for individual rhino as well as provide relevant management information on distribution patterns and population dynamics of this endangered species.

Human-Elephant Conflict in the Okavango Delta

Researcher: Anna Songhurst

In Botswana's Okavango Panhandle, humans and elephants are sharing and competing for limited resources (land, water, natural vegetation, and crops) along the Okavango River, with resultant increasing conflict between the two species. Many local communities complain of crop loss, property damage, fear of walking to work/school, and even human deaths due to living in close proximity with elephants. The Panhandle has thus been identified as a human-elephant conflict (HEC) hotspot in Botswana and there is a real need for greater understanding of the underlying patterns and processes involved.

The project investigates the ecology of elephants utilising this hotspot so as to provide an understanding of why, when and where conflict occurs and which elephants are the main perpetrators. It also aims to provide valuable information on where elephants are coming from in order to position and concentrate mitigation measures (i.e. chilli fields and electric fences) in places where they will be most successful.

Data collection on crop-raiding incidents began in April 2008 and ground transects were driven three times a month to collect data on the spatial use of elephants, people and livestock in the study area. 628 fields were visited and farmers interviewed in 2008, 466 of which were raided and 162 non-raided fields. Data analysis is underway in order to conduct a comparison between raided and non-raided fields. A total of six elephants were shot as problem animals in 2008; carcasses were visited and data such as GPS locations, sex and age recorded. Fortunately, no elephant-induced human deaths or injuries were recorded in the study area during 2008.

During 2008 all villages in the study area were visited and project personnel introduced to the community. 10 locally appointed 'enumerators' of elephant damage were trained to collect data over three months before the crops were harvested. 628 farmers were interviewed, with questions primarily directed towards investigating elephant damage and elephant movements. Educational talks were organised with local schools.

Ultimately this information on the ecology and movements of elephants will assist wildlife managers and farmers in developing practical and effective alternative land-use planning strategies and mitigation measures to try and reduce future conflict in the area.

Linyanti Elephant and Biodiversity Project

Researcher: Gabriella Teren

The extremely high population of elephants in Botswana and the seasonal concentration of large herds along the Linyanti River make northern Botswana the ideal environment to study the effects elephants have on riparian ecosystems. The argument that elephants destroy habitat for other species has been used to justify culling programmes to reduce elephant numbers, but with little scientific backing. This study investigates the changes in woody plant biodiversity in the Linyanti, a woodland area subject to the highest elephant concentrations in the world. The aim was to attempt to locate the drivers of this change and to establish what these changes mean for heterogeneity and biodiversity of the area, over a long time-period.

In two previous studies on the Linyanti woodland (1992 and 2001), high-resolution aerial photographs were taken, covering a 40km stretch of riverine woodland. Thanks to advances in Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, these photos have now been subjected to detailed analysis of the vegetation changes and then compared in turn with photos taken in July 2008 in a Trust-funded aerial survey.

Using spatial statistical programmes and fieldwork the percentage of change in the shrub layer, size classes of trees, and non-woody plants were assessed as well as species changes, and associated changes in species richness, and taxonomic value. The trends reveal that the tall acacia trees prevalent in the 1960s are disappearing mainly due to elephant debarking, and the replacement seedlings are not able to reach maturity. Instead, the woodland has been rapidly replaced by a shrub layer composed of just a few species, which is a concern for biodiversity.

Based on this, the possible driver of these changes is being sought: elephants are possibly the main drivers of change, while a second hypothesis contends that climate change is the cause.

If the latter, then this study is an opportunity to document possible climate change effects on an ecosystem which will add to the knowledge base of climate change in southern Africa. It also highlights the advantages of using GIS and the latest technologies in addressing ecological issues. As part of the study, tree-rings and fossil pollen will help create a picture of natural woodland cycling over centuries, never before done in southern Africa. The final outcome should enable planning of a future management scenario for biodiversity regarding elephant disturbance and the effects of climate change in northern Botswana.

Makuleke Transboundary Elephant Movements

Researchers: Dr. Michele Henley & Dr. Steve Henley

The elephants within the Makuleke Concession of the far northern Kruger National Park (KNP) exhibit clear seasonal differences in numbers, with substantially higher occurrences in the dry season compared with the wet season. It is assumed that in the wet season the elephants move both southward within the KNP and northward into Zimbabwe. Knowledge of the elephant movements has ramifications for the design of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. This Transfrontier Park will link the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, KNP in South Africa, Gonarezhou National Park, Manjinji Pan Sanctuary and Malipati Safari Area in Zimbabwe, as well as two areas between Kruger and Gonarezhou, namely the Sengwe communal land in Zimbabwe and the Makuleke region in South Africa, hopefully providing elephants with far larger home ranges through which to move.

The appropriate location of the corridor linking Gonarezhou to the other protected areas is of particular importance and it is hoped that by collaring elephants in the Makuleke area some questions will be answered as to their seasonal movements. To be successful, this corridor must meet the needs of the wildlife species it is designed for, and at the same time minimise the risk of conflict between these animals and people inhabiting the area.

Using GPS-satellite collars, elephant movements and range use patterns will be determined. Training of Wilderness Safaris guides to collect photos and data on individual elephants is ongoing and collars have begun to be fitted during the late winter months when elephant densities are highest. Data on the movements of the collared elephants will be added to the planned maps of all animals that have been collared by Save the Elephants across Africa.

The project thus aims to make a meaningful contribution toward the appropriate design of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, and uncover the seasonal distribution patterns of elephants in and around the Makuleke Concession. This research will no doubt contribute toward a wider study of elephant movement and range use patterns along the western and eastern borders of the KNP.

Namibia Elephant Population Dynamics Project

Researchers: Werner Killian & Dr Conrad Brain

Using a novel method to assess elephant numbers, this project seeks to understand the ecological factors that regulate or limit the dynamics of elephant populations in north-western Namibia. The project aims to assess differences in age structure, the seasonality of calving rates, timing of births, and recruitment and the impact of environmental variability, including disease such as anthrax, on the demography of the elephant populations.

Long-term studies of population dynamics are of great importance and have significant consequences for wildlife management and conservation biology. Etosha is the ideal site to study these factors as data on elephant population trends have been collected since 1972 in this Park. The eastern Etosha elephants appear to be regulated by the disease anthrax to the extent that the population remains stable, a rare phenomenon that has not been reported elsewhere in Africa. Further west the incidence of anthrax in elephants decreases and other factors interact to regulate these populations.

An effective way in which to illustrate population regulation is through demographic studies and elephants are particularly suited to these types of studies because age classes are readily identifiable.

Using aerial photogrammetry, a method that consists of photographing elephant breeding herds vertically, entire elephant herd demography can be accurately assessed and over time used to determine seasonal recruitment and age specific mortality.

In the dry season of 2008 two aerial photographic operations were carried out starting in eastern Etosha and working west. Approximately 280 elephants were recorded and age structures of the various herds determined using a measure of spine length. A vertical digital photograph was taken of a herd and downloaded for later analysis. Herd structure, locality and any defining features were concurrently recorded. In collaboration with the University of California Berkley and the Etosha Ecological Institute, individual elephants within multiple herds were radio-collared. Ground verification on select marked herds complimented the aerial demographic studies. Once a more extensive east-west gradient of elephant herd demography is complete, changes within the demographic structure across the gradient can be further analysed.

Namibian Elephant and Giraffe Project

Researcher: Dr. Keith Leggett

In 2001, the Namibian Elephant and Giraffe Trust (NEGT) was constituted with research beginning on the Northwest Namibia Desert-Dwelling Elephant and Giraffe Project. The overall aim of NEGT is to provide scientifically gathered data on elephants and other large mammals to local, regional and national decision-makers. The project was initially based in the Kunene Region, but in 2005 the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) requested that NEGT undertake a detailed study of the elephants in the Omusati Region. This project is designed to be a collaborative research effort between the NEGT, the MET and the Uukwuluudhi Conservancy.

In 2007, eight elephants were collared in the western Hoanib River, Hobatere Game Reserve and Omusati regions with GPS collars provided by Data Scout (SA). As of April 2008 all of the new collars had failed, either because the elephants removed the collars themselves, or failure of the collars due to a poor batch of batteries. Data Scout has undertaken to provide an additional eight collars to the project free of charge to compensate for the lack of durability in the current collars.

The 2008 wet season was the best wet season on record for almost 70 years with substantial rainfall across the research area. The long-term average rainfall in the area is 50-100mm; in 2008, approximately 350mm fell across the region. This severely restricted research activities for four months because of the difficulty in accessing the research area. However, behavioural studies continued and it seems that the heavy rainfall may have initiated a change in feeding behaviour from mostly browsing during "normal" years to mostly grazing during the current year. It is too early to tell whether the increase in the abundance of vegetation will have any effect on the elephants' reproductive potential.

2008 also saw nine field trips, one community meeting attended and involvement of community game guards in various aspects of the research, such as monitoring of the elephants.

Brown Hyaena Research Project

Researcher: Dr. Ingrid Wiesel

The Brown Hyaena Research Project has studied the brown hyaena population in south-western Namibia since 2004 with its ultimate aim being to ensure the long-term conservation and survival of this species and its ecosystem. Initially technology only allowed for store-on-board collars, where data could only be retrieved once the collar dropped off. In 2006 remote download collars became available, with data being downloaded via VHF signal to a receiver. The advantages of remote downloads include more regular data retrieval and the implementing of mitigation strategies in good time, especially in areas with human-wildlife conflict situations.

Thirteen brown hyaenas and one spotted hyaena have been fitted with GPS telemetry collars since 2003. Data retrieved from these collars provides detailed information about brown hyaena ecology and behaviour in the project's study areas. Studies took place in three different habitats within the Sperrgebiet and Namib Naukluft Parks: the coastal area, the area around the town of Luderitz and inland areas.

Data collected since 1997 indicates that the distribution of permanent and periodic water sources is more important to brown hyaenas than previously suggested by other researchers. Furthermore, brown hyaenas occupying territories in inland areas of the Sperrgebiet also make use of the coast on regular excursions out of their territory, with travelling distances reaching more than 50km to reach the coastal food sources.

Over the past 11 years, limitations and adaptabilities of brown hyaenas in the coastal areas of the Sperrgebiet have been studied. It is clear that, although seals are an abundant and permanent food source, the brown hyaena population is limited by factors other than food availability and quality. Intra- and inter-specific competition, habitat limitations and the general clan structure seems to influence its population growth.

With the imminent proclamation of the Sperrgebiet as a National Park, the project's data becomes even more important and many aspects of these studies will contribute to and aid in the future monitoring of the brown hyaena as a flagship species of the Park.

Central Kalahari Wild Dog Research

Researcher: Glyn Maude

*The wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) is critically endangered, numbering between 3 000 and 5 500 free-ranging individuals (IUCN 2004) across discrete habitats in Africa. Of these, Botswana has an estimated 800. While wild dogs are seen quite often in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), there is almost no knowledge available about these populations. This project aims to determine an accurate estimate of the wild dog population in the CKGR – the numbers, densities and pack structures, the surroundings and the factors that influence their population dynamics and spatial ecology and that bring them into conflict with humans.*

Other information to be gleaned include details of their diet in the region, pack sizes and age and sex structures relative to wild dog packs elsewhere in northern Botswana. One of the conservation priorities outlined in the IUCN Canid Action Plan is to "maintain connectivity of habitat available to wild dogs, particularly in Northern Botswana" and to "carry out surveys of other potentially important populations". The wild dog work in the CKGR will produce information that will be in line with the above statements.

Two adult members from each of five packs will be collared (two were collared in November 2008) – one with a GPS remote download unit and one with a VHF unit – and then tracked on a regular basis for direct observations and to determine spatial requirements.

Through research done by the wider CKGR programme on seasonal prey abundance and movement, the factors that influence wild dog ecology can be examined and habitat preferences can also be determined.

In addition, blood, tissue and hair samples will be gathered for purposes of disease testing and population genetics. Both of these are key issues within the species in regard to genetic bottlenecks and fatal diseases such as rabies and distemper.

This project is part of the broader CKGR research programme. It is hoped that this research will see a significant increase in the overall knowledge of a highly endangered species living in an environment within which little is known of its ecology.

Education for Predator Conservation

Coordinator: Rebecca Klein

With only 10 000 left in the wild, the cheetah is Africa's most endangered large cat, facing extinction, habitat loss and human persecution through farming conflicts and illegal trade. Cheetah Conservation Botswana (CCB) is a long-term, multidisciplinary conservation project incorporating scientific research, community outreach and education with regards to this species.

The Wilderness Trust is sponsoring the community outreach component of this important project which aims to raise awareness for the importance of predators in healthy ecosystems, encourage good environmental stewardship and promote alternatives to existing in conflict with predator species. This takes place via school visits, resource distribution (predator education books, posters and DVDs) and two-day residential teacher training workshops.

The primary aim of the community outreach component is to investigate the population status and distribution of cheetah on farmlands and the role of predator / livestock conflicts and methods of control utilised. This information helps in determining areas of conflict and which methods communities are currently utilising, providing vital insight into what actions need to be taken to facilitate coexistence. The method used is site visits to farms, cattle posts and villages throughout Botswana, where information is gathered, including socio-economic factors, farm details, current management techniques, predator sightings, conflict incidences and community perceptions.

Information on effective farm/livestock management and non-lethal predator control is distributed to communities during visits, workshops and via Farmers Associations and village networks. Monthly workshops bring farmers together to discuss techniques and methods. Training workshops are carried out for Problem Animal Control (PAC) officers of the Wildlife Department, and a mobile workshop is circulated around villages and outlying communities by community outreach officers, teaching communities how to identify different predators and signs so that appropriate management methods can be implemented to decrease conflict and facilitate coexistence between humans and cats.

In this way it is hoped to encourage and educate rural communities in managing their wildlife resources, particularly the cheetah, sustainably.

GLTCA Wild Dog Project

Researchers: Rosemary Groom, Dr. Peter Lindsey & Dr. Stephanie Romañach

Since 2007, the project has been working to protect the endangered African wild dog in the Zimbabwean part of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTCA), establishing the population status and assessing the relative impact of various threats such as snaring, disease, habitat fragmentation, prey depletion and other predator populations. Efforts have focused on the Savé Valley Conservancy (SVC) which once hosted the world's highest density of wild dogs and still supports an important population. The abundance, distribution and conservation status of wild dogs in the rest of the GLTCA, particularly in Gonarezhou National Park, is being investigated as well.

Research has indicated that nine wild dog packs, numbering approximately 130 dogs, inhabit the SVC. 76 of these have been individually identified in a photographic database and six collars have been placed on individuals in four different packs. The collared packs are monitored to gather information on home range, litter sizes, pup survival, adult survival and causes of adult mortality.

Snaring appears to be the biggest threat, with 4 out of 5 recent deaths due to snares; snare removal from injured wild dogs is an ongoing task. In 2007 and 2008 a census of large predators was conducted which indicated that both spotted hyaena and lion populations are increasing rapidly, posing a potentially significant additional threat.

Elevated densities of lions in the unsettled portions of SVC increase the risk that wild dogs will spend more time in conservancy areas that were settled during the land reform programme, where the risks from snaring are higher.

Preliminary data collection in the rest of the GLTCA indicates there is one pack of 11 wild dogs in the adjacent Malilangwe Trust Conservancy and at least two large packs and one small pack in Gonarezhou National Park. Wild dogs appear to have been extirpated from several private wildlife ranches where they used to be resident, due to direct mortalities through snaring and loss of their prey-base through bush-meat poaching.

Key activities in 2009 include ongoing monitoring of the SVC wild dog population, monitoring of the threat posed by snaring, the annual SVC predator census, and a predator census of Gonarezhou NP (GNP). Despite the large size and pivotal position of GNP in the GLTCA, little is known about the status of wild dogs or other predators in the park. Finally, we plan to assess the distribution and status of wild dogs throughout the rest of the Zimbabwean portions of the GLTCA and Shashe-Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, and by working with colleagues in adjacent countries, determine the degree of connectivity with sub-populations occurring in Mozambique, Botswana and South Africa.

Hwange Leopard Population Dynamics

Researcher: Dr. Gianetta Purchase

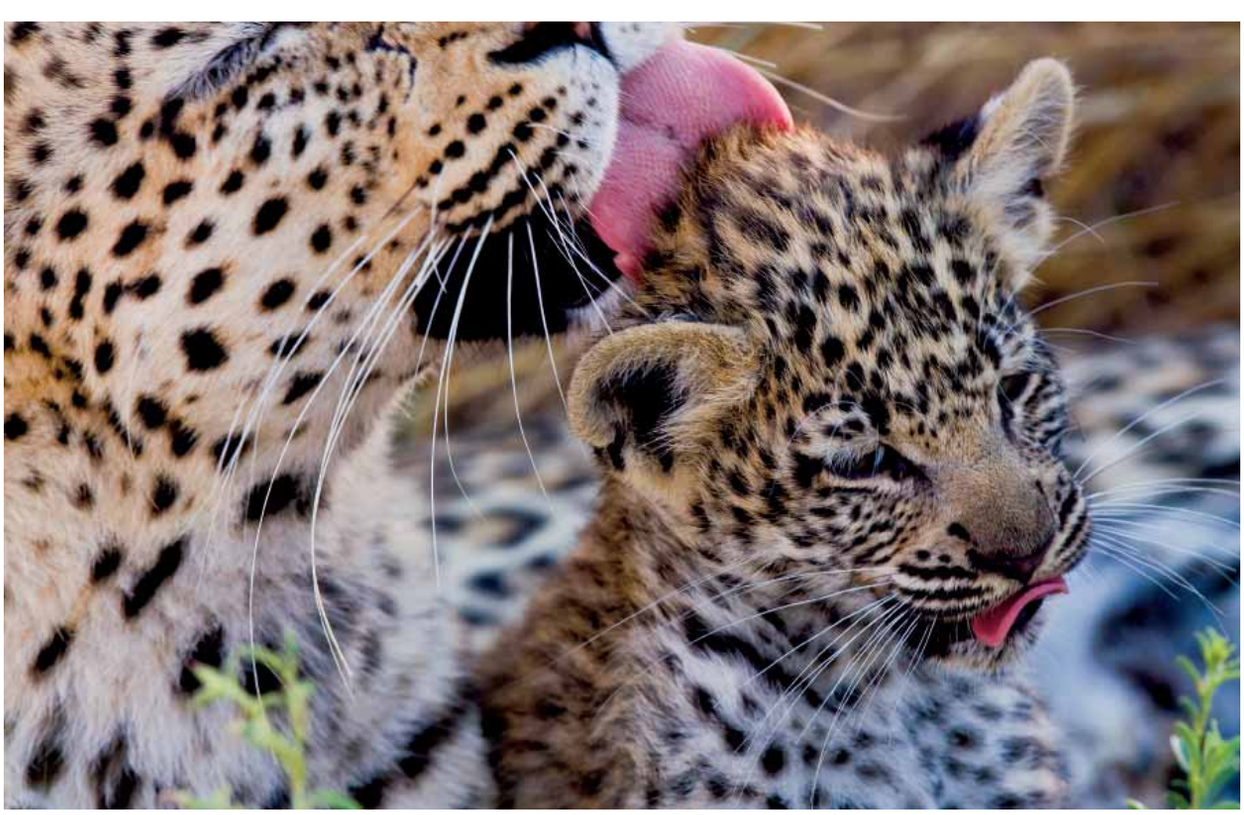
There is increasing concern that the current utilisation system of leopard in Zimbabwe may not be sustainable, given the lack of knowledge regarding the status, distribution, threats and population dynamics of this predator species. What is available indicates that they may have a complex social structure and suffer high levels of intraspecific mortality. It is important to understand the dynamics of leopard populations if we are to be able to determine what levels of off-take may be sustainable.

Run under the auspices of the Zambezi Society, this project compares leopard populations in a protected area (South-eastern Hwange National Park) with that of a hunting / pastoralist area (Tsholotsho communal land) to ascertain whether the current utilisation of leopard is sustainable.

The south-eastern area of Hwange National Park is an ideal location to collect data for a fully protected population of leopard and compare with data collected from an area with human settlement, livestock and where leopard are hunted as trophy animals. The soil, rainfall and habitat of the south-eastern area of Hwange and the north-east section of Tsholotsho communal land which borders the concessions are similar, enabling a comparison of leopard populations to be carried out.

The project is performing spoor (track) transects in Hwange's Makalolo Concession and the adjacent area of Tsholotsho communal land to compare spoor densities between the two sites. Camera traps are also being used to aid with identification of individuals. A layout of paired camera traps (set to photograph both sides of the animal and triggered by heat or motion) maximises the chance of photographing all individuals in the area.

The impact of utilisation on leopard population dynamics will be able to be assessed on the basis of this and other components of the work. The results will also be of use to other countries across the subregion, given the similarities between them and Zimbabwe in terms of wildlife protection systems and the way in which wildlife is utilised in southern Africa.



Shadow Hunter Project

Researcher: Sara Tromp

*The black mongoose (*Galerella nigrata*) is considered to be the largest endemic carnivore in Namibia – and possibly a species in its own right. This project aims to verify its taxonomic status, and to better understand black mongooses and the unique habitat in which they are found. It also hopes to increase the awareness of other less charismatic endemic species in Namibia amongst local communities.*

Over 2008 the 'scat project' – collecting black mongoose scats from two sites – was extremely successful with over 70 fresh scats at each site. These are being analysed as part of a Master's degree and the findings will be published within the next year.

Nuclear DNA analysis validated findings in 2007 (where mitochondrial DNA was looked at) with regards to the species status of the black mongoose – there are strong indicators that this is a species separate from other closely related mongooses in the *Galerella* genus. Genetic samples collected in 2008 are being analysed as well, furthering the laboratory analysis of the 2007 samples.

The movement of various genetic markers are being mapped and at first glance it appears that there is a great deal more genetic exchange between populations than originally thought. This is good news for conservation as it means that the populations are adequately linked despite their habitat being highly fragmented.

The populations situated at Hobatere (west of Etosha) and Ohorongo (south of Etosha) have the highest levels of genetic diversity; both areas are very well managed and there appears to be no need to take further conservation measures here.

Throughout 2008 the project attempted to trap and collar black mongooses at Hobatere to continue studying the behavioural ecology of this species. Only three individuals were trapped and collared however. Over the next year, the aim is to collar, track and monitor a total of 20 adult mongooses, adding to the population knowledge in the main study area.

Ecology of Buffalo in the Okavango Delta

Researcher: Emily Bennitt

The African buffalo is one of the most numerous mammals in the Okavango Delta and at 30 000 individuals, it is also the most important species in terms of biomass. Information on this population is sparse however, so the gathering of data on population demographics, home ranges, diet, and habitat modification will produce a better understanding of the ecology of buffalo in this region. Other data includes the animals' feeding patterns, quality and composition of the vegetation on which they feed and interactions with the buffalo cordon fence and local farmers outside the protected area.

Buffalo have been observed in other ecosystems living in fission-fusion societies, with herds splitting and reforming throughout the year. These movements are being monitored in the Okavango through the use of GPS collars that have been fitted onto 13 cows in different herds.

Aerial photographs are being taken to assess herd size, while, age and sex ratios are recorded from vehicles. GPS fixes from the collars are plotted into Google Earth to identify the habitat type that the buffalo were in at the time of the fix. Dietary preferences, grass species composition and movements of the herds are all being taken into account.

While several collars ceased to work over 2008, the remainder allowed some interesting information to emerge. Seasonal shifts in movement of buffalo were observed in December and in April, with herds spending the wet season mainly in mopane woodland and the rest of the year in floodplain systems. From the beginning of the late flood season, all the herds used floodplain and island systems more than other habitat types. Based on behavioural observations of herds, it has become apparent that buffalo do not spend more than one hour in a location while grazing. The grazing pressure from the rest of the herd could be pushing animals to move on to fresher patches.

Luangwa Thornicroft's Giraffe Project

Researcher: Dr. Julian Fennessy

*The Thornicroft's giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis thornicrofti*) is a morphologically distinct population of giraffe endemic to the Luangwa Valley in Zambia. It is biologically isolated from other populations and as such ecologically and potentially genetically unique. The project was the first in-depth scientific research of the species since the late 1970s and aimed to provide baseline estimates of the current population size and whether it is stable, increasing or decreasing, social structure and dynamics. A genetic and population census took place in July 2008, the peak period of giraffe congregations in their preferred habitats. The second expedition is proposed for early 2009 following analysis of the first.*

With recent genetic studies showing that groups of giraffes across Africa are reproductively isolated from each other and potentially distinct species, the endemic Thornicroft's giraffe may prove to be a unique species which would further highlight the need for increased conservation and management of its unique genetic heritage. As an iconic symbol of Zambia, the Thornicroft's giraffe is an important tourism drawcard for visitors to the country and thus an economic asset for Zambia. The information obtained from the aims of this project will be combined and implemented at a practical management level, with the aim of better enabling sustainable management of wildlife populations in partnership with the relevant stakeholders.

Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust funding enabled a number of the key elements to be supported for this project and its ongoing management e.g. support for flights, food, accommodation and equipment.

Makgadikgadi Zebra Migration Project

Researcher: James Bradley

The Makgadikgadi Zebra Migration Research Project sets out to examine and quantify the ecological impact of the 2004 fencing of the Makgadikgadi ecosystem, with a specific focus on migratory zebra and wildebeest populations. The project also looks at the current size of the zebra and wildebeest populations in the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park (MPNP) as well as predation rates and the impact of competition between livestock and wildlife over grazing and water resources.

The position of the game fence, along the south-western boundary of the MPNP, coincides with the dry-season range of the migratory zebra and wildebeest populations. During the dry season, wildlife is thus reliant on waterholes situated near the fence. The project will gather data in the field for two dry seasons (over a three-year period) when impact caused by the Makgadikgadi fence is at its greatest.

The project will also assess the response of local communities to the installation of the fence and look at whether the fence is perceived as having had a positive or negative impact on the local area, with specific reference to grazing availability for cattle and livestock predation by predators.

Ten GPS collars were provided for the collaring of cattle along the Boteti River; monthly vegetation transects, sward sampling and water sampling were also conducted. In comparison, ten zebra and ten wildebeest mares will be collared to monitor their movement and behaviour patterns. These data will be compared with similar pre-fence data to help determine how movement and foraging strategies have changed. All collars will be used to track individuals, enabling direct behavioural observations to be made and identification of selected grazing sites. In addition, aerial censuses are being conducted.

The results of the project could be used to provide a strategy for management objectives of the MPNP and future fencing policies in conflict situations in other parts of Botswana and Africa.

Okavango Delta Large Herbivore Ecology Project

Researcher: Harriet Bartlam

The Large Herbivore Ecology Project aimed to understand the present seasonal population densities, demographics and distribution of the key large-bodied herbivores – Cape buffalo, African elephant, blue wildebeest, giraffe, greater kudu, impala, Burchell's zebra, red lechwe and tsessebe – within the southern Okavango Delta. Season-, habitat- and area-specific data is also being gathered on available resource characteristics, local flooding regime and fire incidence, hopefully increasing the understanding of the current state of the Okavango Delta's herbivore population and how they utilise the Okavango system.

During 2008, the collared zebras across the Moremi Game Reserve showed some interesting seasonal movements based on the field research undertaken in both the self-drive Moremi and Mombo/Chief's Island study areas. Habitat usage by the zebra varied significantly once enough rain had fallen to fill seasonal pans and to initiate vegetation growth. In both areas, utilisation of grassland and open acacia habitats increased during the wet season. The first year results show that during the wet season the annual grass growth is maximal in these habitats; zebra may therefore have moved into these areas to select these nutrient-rich annual grasses. The differing wet and dry season home range was especially distinct in the self-drive study area.

Namibia Crane and Wetland Bird Conservation Project

Researchers: Mike Scott & Ann Scott

*Blue Cranes (*Anthropoides paradiseus*) are the world's most range-restricted crane species, occurring mainly in three discrete sub-populations in South Africa. However, a curiously isolated breeding population also occurs in Namibia, over 1 000km north of the others, within Etosha National Park and on the grasslands to the north. These pose a genetic and conservation puzzle: how do these birds survive without mixing with the South African birds and in particular, within the predator-rich Etosha National Park?*

This study aims to determine the reasons for the small and possibly declining population of Blue Cranes through population size monitoring, and to identify the factors critical in the ecology of these birds in Namibia. Part of the project included fitting an adult Blue Crane with a GPS satellite tracking device in April 2008, enabling scientists to track its movements via the Internet.

More than two years into the research project, the team continues to be puzzled about the seasonal movements of these charismatic yet elusive birds.

During a combined aerial/ground count undertaken in April 2008, only nine adult Blue Cranes were recorded within the Park, and none in the Lake Oponono area to the north. Despite the low numbers of adult birds, breeding continues with at least seven chicks produced in 2006, only one chick in 2007 and at least seven in 2008. Adults with chicks have been recorded inside the Park only, suggesting that conditions outside are unsuitable for breeding. Since April 2006, 10 of the 14 chicks recorded have been tagged with rings to enable resighting; based on the resighting data, chick survival is presently estimated at 43% which is relatively high.

Results have shown that the numbers of cranes vary according to season and rainfall, but appear to be generally higher outside the Park boundaries than within. The cranes also appear to make use of the adjoining Lake Oponono area during dry periods, and this area therefore requires conservation attention.

From a conservation point of view Blue Cranes are classified as Critically Endangered in Namibia due to their tiny population size and the 25% decline in numbers since the late 1980s. Population size in Etosha National Park was estimated at 80 birds in 1989 but by 1994 this had declined to only 60, comprising 49 adults and 11 juveniles.

Okavango Nest Box Project

Researcher: Zenzele Mpofu

The Okavango Nest Box Project, part of the larger Meyer's Parrot Project, aims to investigate the ecology of hole-nesting bird species and competitors for these natural tree cavities in the Okavango Delta. An overall analysis of the availability and preference of nest cavities as a keystone for ecological processes of the Meyer's parrot and other species will produce data that will be used to develop a strategy that will protect the species and the community in which it lives in the future.

Another aim of this project is to look at whether nest boxes can be successfully used to substitute the removal of old-growth timber and woodland habitat. This is especially important during the modern era where cavity nesters are threatened by increasing deforestation due to logging and burning. To this end, the project will assess both nest box preferences and breeding biology of bird species that make use of cavities in which to nest.

Other threats such as ectoparasites and predation are being investigated to determine to what extent these might be limiting factors. The use of nest boxes and natural cavities by different species will be compared to see if a conservation plan for cavity nesting bird species can be developed.

The study is taking place on Vundumtiki Island in the Kwedi Concession in the Okavango Delta where a large population of Meyer's Parrot and other cavity-nesting bird species exist. To date 25 active Meyer's Parrot nest sites have been identified in the area and estimates of natural cavities are being obtained. In addition 30 wooden nest boxes, 105 PVC nest boxes and 45 palm trunk sections have been put up in dead or damaged Knobthorn or Leadwood trees in various ecotones and biomes, including riverine forest. Climate, temperature, humidity and other data are recorded at each site daily and nest boxes inspected. During nesting season eggs will be measured, ectoparasites collected, and behaviour observed for later analysis.

Maputaland Sea Turtle Project

Researcher: Chris Boyes

In 1963, an initiative by the Natal Parks Board (now Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife) and Dr George Hughes set out to protect and monitor the 56km stretch of beach now known as the Maputaland Marine Reserve. Since then, donations made via the World Wildlife Fund, Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust, and Rocktail Bay Lodge have ensured that this project has been in operation for 46 years, making it one of the longest running turtle research projects in the world.

In the past two years, in addition to its ongoing protective function, the project obtained an added academic aspect as MSc. researcher Chris Boyes conducted a study on "The Nesting Ecology of Leatherback and Loggerhead Sea-turtles along the Maputaland Coast of South Africa." Accommodation and food for Chris and his research assistant was funded by the Wilderness Trust and provided by Wilderness Safaris at Rocktail Bay Lodge. Boyes took part in 95% of Rocktail Bay Lodge's Turtle research drives allowing for a more consistent beach patrol during this season.

Final Findings of the 2007/2008 Season

During the five-month nesting season, 107 leatherback nests, 360 loggerhead nests, 327 aborted nesting crawls by loggerheads and 6 aborted nesting crawls by leatherbacks were marked using GPS. Of these 12 nests were predated (7 leatherback and 5 loggerhead nests respectively), three by honey badgers, one by crabs, another by mongoose and the remainder by unidentified predators.

106 hatchling emergences were witnessed – 27 being leatherback and 79 loggerhead turtles. Emergence success for loggerhead hatchlings was 82.9% with 1.2% of the hatchlings not emerging successfully from the nest chamber. The emergence success for leatherbacks was 75% with 3.5% of the hatchlings not emerging successfully. The higher percentage of leatherbacks not emerging could be attributed to their deeper nests.

In addition, data continued to be collected by Turtle Monitors at Rocktail Bay Lodge as per Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's monitoring programme using titanium and Passive Integrated Transponder tags as well as observational data such as measuring carapace length and width.

With additional experimentation and the refining and improvement of methodologies the data collected will allow scientists and managers to compile a management plan for these species so as to ensure their continued survival.

Findings of 2008/2009 Season

Successful loggerhead egg-laying to date this season totalled 173 nests, with 98 recorded false crawls. Leatherbacks nested successfully 40 times with only two false crawls.

Botswana Wildlife Research - increasing capacity

Coordinator: Kai Collins

In the first step of a three-year project the Trust secured funding from The Leading Travel Companies Conservation Foundation (www.tltc.com/foundation) to develop three research camps in key areas of northern Botswana. In this way, research capacity within private concession areas in northern Botswana has been increased by hosting and funding researchers and research which addresses questions of national and international importance in the field of ecology and endangered species protection.

In return Wilderness Safaris will open these areas to researchers from leading academic institutions and provide logistical and in-kind support for these individuals and their work.

Three basic research units have been built, each consisting of a simple canvas, shade-cloth and gum pole tent, built-in bathroom, two beds and a desk, as well as a similar facility for visiting supervisors or co-workers. The units are powered by solar panel, inverter and battery system (for laptop and a fan) and the water is heated by solar geyser, thus minimising environmental footprint at the camp site. Three vehicles will be purchased to service these three camps so as to avoid logistical challenges presented in the normal day-to-day running of a camp.

The research tents are built in the Mombo, Kings Pool and Vumbura Plains areas, allowing for a wide variety of studies across a broad ecological base and thus a comprehensive opportunity to cover current key research issues.

The resultant increase in capacity over the next three years will ensure an increased research output from the private concession areas in northern Botswana, the data and analysis of which is then being made available to both the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks as well as to regional protected area managers. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Park that links Botswana, Angola, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Hwange Research Coordinator

Coordinator: Jaelle Claypole

In order to assist Hwange National Park in continuing its vital conservation work, an ecologist has been appointed whose mandate is to coordinate all research and conservation activities in south-eastern Hwange.

As Ecology Research Coordinator, Jaelle Claypole assists Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) in anti-poaching efforts and white rhino monitoring. She is also collating wildlife population statistics in association with other research groups in the area; by closely analysing animal populations and trends, recommendations can be made with respect to conservation and management practices.

Because the PWMA works with limited budget and scarce resources due to the current economic crisis in Zimbabwe, research is difficult to undertake. With an in-house researcher in the area such vital research now becomes possible. All data collected is passed on to National Parks for their use and analysis.

Claypole also assists NGOs and independent researchers by collecting data on specific species and passing the information on to research groups where a more detailed report or analysis may be done. This will broaden their study range, and data collection as well as limit costs incurred.

Other aims include coordinating and interacting with the various safari camps within the Park and proposing conservation and research initiatives; liaising with other likeminded organisations to aid conservation and research in general; and setting up specific research topics relevant to the management of south-eastern Hwange National Park.

Projects that are involved include anti-poaching activities, white rhino monitoring, the Hwange Lion Research Project, the Leopard Research Project, assisting CIRAD/HERD, Painted Dog Research Project and seasonal 24-hour game censuses conducted for WEZ (Wildlife Environment Zimbabwe), providing a general trend in seasonal variation in animal populations, densities and distributions.

Children in the Wilderness

Coordinator: Heather Wilson

Children in the Wilderness extended further this past year with programmes run in Zimbabwe for the first time, as well as in Zambia's South Luangwa National Park and Rocktail Bay Lodge in South Africa. For the first time in its eight-year history, Children in the Wilderness is now running camps and follow-up programmes in all countries in which Wilderness Safaris operates: Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Seychelles.

To date Children in the Wilderness has hosted 2 617 children throughout southern Africa and has changed their lives dramatically and positively. As the programme has been rolled out to all the regions in which Wilderness Safaris operates, so its contribution has become greater.

No fewer than 480 children were hosted in 2008 with the addition of CITW camps in Zimbabwe. Countries such as Botswana, Namibia and Malawi host just under 100 children per year with smaller numbers being hosted in South Africa, Zambia, Seychelles and Zimbabwe.

Children in the Wilderness

Tribute to Paul Newman

Children in the Wilderness would like to pay tribute to Paul Newman and the charitable work that he initiated in Africa. It was during Paul Newman's stay with Wilderness Safaris in 2001 that the inspiration for Children in the Wilderness was born. The idea of an African version of his Hole in the Wall Gang programme was discussed, and designed specifically for underprivileged rural children. Thanks to his input and enthusiasm the first Children in the Wilderness camp was held in Botswana by the end of that year. Children in the Wilderness would like to honour a great man who accomplished an enormous amount for children around the world.

Fundraising activities

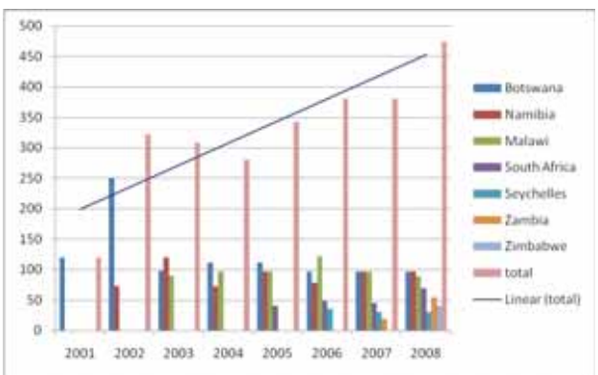
To ensure that these continue to go from strength to strength, fundraising is an ongoing and a vital element to the success of the programme. Children in the Wilderness continues to look for interested sponsors and has many sponsorship options available. This includes sponsoring a camp, a child and/or participating in or sponsoring a cyclist on one of our fundraising events. To this end, the annual Tour de Wilderness bike ride has been established which combines all the fundraising activities that will be launched to raise the much needed funds for the Children in the Wilderness programme.

Children in the Wilderness focuses on the next generation of rural decision makers, through a well-thought-out educational programme which uses the healing power of nature to inspire its young participants. Wilderness Safaris closes some of its camps for a week at a time and, using a curriculum covering environmental education, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and life skills, teaches the children the importance of conservation and strives to instil a passion for the environment so that they can become the custodians of these areas in the future.

The Children in the Wilderness programme and curriculum:
- Practices and teaches sustainable environmental education.
- Exposes the children to new experiences and new friends.
- Uses teambuilding and communication games and other educational tools to help build self-esteem and life skills, and strengthens the children's capacity to cope with challenges in life.
- Inspires the children to continue with their education.
- Teaches the children skills, crafts and sports that they have not had the opportunity to experience Increases awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS and overall health and nutrition.

Children in the Wilderness

Figure 1: Numbers of CITW participants as at end 2008



Camps 2008/9 report back

Botswana: This year Botswana introduced its Environmental Stewardship Camp, a programme focusing on children identified on the initial Camp with a true interest in their heritage and excellent leadership potential. These children take part in a seven-day guiding course with a curriculum that is an extension of the concepts that they are introduced to on the initial Camp Programme, but with a more in-depth conservation focus.

Malawi: In January and February 119 children were hosted at Chintheche Inn over a four-week period. During the first two weeks, the participants selected were orphans or disadvantaged children from the surrounding areas, while during the second two weeks HIV-positive children from Malawi's capital, Lilongwe, were hosted.

Namibia: In May and June, 32 children were hosted at the exciting new venue of Hoanib River Camp, located next to the enormous Skeleton Coast National Park. This rugged area, the home of the legendary desert elephant and the last free-roaming black rhino population on Earth, was explored via nature walks and drives. In this way the children learnt about the wildlife, birds and plants of the area and were introduced to conservation in ways that they can take back to their own communities.

Seychelles: North Island closed its doors to paying guests to host 30 children selected by the National Council for Children (NCC). Environmental awareness – tree planting, a fishing game promoting species awareness, beach litter and recycling, the environmental history of North Island, and tourism and its importance to the country – was combined with a workshop on protective behaviours against abuse and a workshop on HIV awareness. These were run by the NCC as continuation of the counselling already being attended by the children in Mahé.

South Africa: The first Children in the Wilderness camp at Rocktail Bay Lodge, Maputaland, was held in October when 22 children from the local community enjoyed five days that were completely different to anything they had experienced in their lives, learning about themselves, the world around them and each other.

Children in the Wilderness

2008 also saw the first Pafuri Follow-up Programme in the Makuleke community. The children who had been to a previous camp took part in the programme which discussed water conservation and HIV/AIDS and included the establishment of an Environmental Club. They were given packets of seeds to take home and plant so that the follow-up could extend its benefits to the children's households.

"Most kids responded very well and were keen to answer the questions, snapping their fingers and jumping out of their seats! We then introduced the Environmental Clubs which we are planning to set up at the schools. We explained what is meant by an Environmental Club, its activities, importance and membership rules. Those who were interested in joining would write their names on the sign-up sheet which we handed to the teacher. Excellent news is that **600** *children from the Makuleke community signed up to belong to the Environmental Club! "*
May Shehab, Follow-up Programme Coordinator

Zambia: In its second year of operation, Children in the Wilderness Zambia extended its reach to South Luangwa National Park where children from Chilongozi Basic School in the Malama Community were hosted at Kalamu Tented Camp. The other was at Lunga River Lodge in the Kafue National Park, where 18 children from Kamakechi Basic School were made welcome by singing, dancing Lunga staff.

Zimbabwe: Children in the Wilderness Zimbabwe ran its first two camps in Linkwasha Camp, where groups of 20 children each experienced the highlights of Hwange National Park. The first group comprised HIV-positive orphans from the Dete Children's Home, while the second group came from a rural school, Mpindo, situated on the eastern border of Hwange. The overriding challenge for the children is the extreme poverty and malnutrition that they suffer from in current Zimbabwe, and so mealtimes were a celebration of life that began with beautiful songs of prayer sung by the children before everyone tucked in. Based on this insight, feeding programmes have been put into place at four schools in the communities just outside Hwange.

Education Bursaries

In its continuing efforts to educate the youth of Africa, the Trust initiated the Education Bursaries Project in 2006, funding bursaries for students either at graduate or post-graduate level in the wildlife and environmental fields. The first recipient, over 2006-7, was Gayle Pedersen who submitted her Master's thesis in late 2008.

In 2008, the project was expanded and more funding devoted to it so that more than one student per year could be assisted. It was decided that bursaries would be offered at the following universities in South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand, Pretoria University and University of Cape Town. A number of learners applied from these institutions – the Trust now funds four students.

In addition, many of the Trust's other projects are assisting researchers – whether directly or indirectly – in completing their MSc. or PhD. studies, so that the Trust is not only helping individuals with their continuing education but aids in the progress or completion of their research projects so that conservation in Africa as a whole benefits.

Enos Mngomezulu, one of the recipients for 2008, completed his studies in Natural Resource and Protected Area Management at the Southern African Wildlife College. The overall aim was to have someone within the Makuleke community trained with the knowledge necessary to manage the resources of the Makuleke Concession in the Kruger National Park.

Enos passed the course with distinction; his lecturer made the following comments:

Enos has achieved a great set of results in the Certificate Course. Enos climbed into the limelight early with his appointment as president of the SRC. His participation in class was appreciatively noted and his energetic organising for field trips and practicals were skilled indeed. Enos is a conservation ambassador and his dedication will greatly benefit his organisation. We wish him every success in his future career.

Other Students funded in 2008:

Ntsanko Millicent Mahlauli (University of the Witwatersrand), Michelle de Klerk (University of Pretoria) and Rhys Williams (University of Pretoria).

Simonga Village Projects

Coordinator: Peter Jones

The partnership between Simonga Village and The River Club in Zambia is now eight years old and since 2000 has carried out a range of projects in the village funded by the generous donations of lodge guests, in conjunction with the Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust, aimed at uplifting the quality of life of everyone in the village.

Initial projects focused on construction (school buildings, a library, medical clinic and police post have been built so far) and water supply by sinking a borehole, setting up storage tanks and installing distribution points throughout the village. Simonga's inhabitants now have access to 50 000 litres of water per day and the ongoing costs, donated by guests and The River Club, include diesel for the generator, maintenance for the water system and water-carrying equipment. Where in the past villagers walked 3km down to the Zambezi River to get their water, today there are taps dotted throughout the village.

In Zambia, schooling is government-assisted until Grade 7, at which point it must be paid for by students or their families. Due to poverty, schooling for many children ends here. The School Project ensures that those children able to pay for schooling do not have to pay the additional fees for examinations, removing some of the financial burden from their parents. The exam fees are sponsored on an annual basis.

The School Library built in 2004 continues to receive donated books from South Africa, the USA and UK, and from guests staying at The River Club. At this stage, the library is being used on a daily basis as a place for the children to read; due to lack of controls at present they do not take books home.

Thanks to guest donations, a reliable, second-hand 24-seat bus has been purchased, allowing students to continue their schooling at secondary schools in Livingstone, something many have been unable to do due to lack of transport. In addition, the bus transports Simonga Basic School students to sports events taking place between different schools in the area, and on school trips to Victoria Falls and other excursions that enhance the children's pride in their natural and historical heritage.

Hwange Anti-Poaching Project

Coordinator: Willem Botha

Wilderness Safaris staff and Zimbabwe's National Parks and Wildlife Authorities, with funding from the Trust, support and maintain an anti-poaching camp, assist with anti-poaching patrols and raids, remove and collect wire snares and de-snare and treat animals wounded by such snares. The tremendous efforts made by individuals and organisations have resulted in increased protection of the wildlife of Hwange National Park.

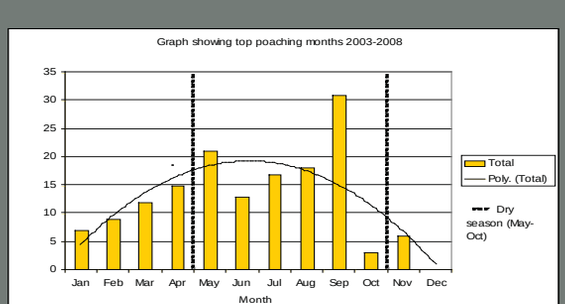
The anti-poaching team continues to conduct regular patrols along the eastern boundary of the park, finding snares on the way. A combined patrol – consisting of Forestry scouts from Dete, National Parks scouts and Samson Tshabalala, the Wilderness Safaris anti-poaching head – in the Forestry area adjacent to Ngamo Plains resulted in the arrest of six poachers, many weapons, including spears, and wire snares. The poachers were sentenced to two years in prison. In October, two more poachers were arrested and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

Wexcau anti-poaching camp is complete with running water so that game scouts can stay here during their patrols. The vehicle funded by the Trust continues to play a vital part in anti-poaching patrols on a daily basis, deploying scouts, patrolling, gathering information, apprehending poachers and delivering them to the police for sentencing.

A study by the Hwange Research Coordinator pinpointed the months with the highest poaching activity and the areas in which this takes place. The two areas where the majority of snares have been found since 2003 are the Wexcau area, approximately 10km from the game fence, and Hwahwadu, approximately 6.5km from the fence.

The top poaching months are during the dry season (May to October, with September as the highest) with fairly low poaching activity in the wet season in comparison. This correlates with the fact that the majority of snares are being found in the dry season, and possibly still cause a higher threat to the animals due to their high concentration around targeted sites.

The graph below shows that the top poaching months are during the dry season (May to October, with September as the highest) with fairly low poaching activity in the wet season in comparison. This may be due to the fact that surface water is available and animals will be more spread out with food and water being available in all places.



Hwange Game Water Supply

Coordinator: Willem Botha

The Trust continues to fund the purchase and maintenance of Lister engines which pump 13 of Hwange National Park's 57 boreholes.

The engines driving borehole pumps are aging rapidly and can no longer keep up the constant pressure. Engine breakdowns are now a daily occurrence and spares are hard to come by in Zimbabwe. As the boreholes fail and repairs are delayed, there is a risk of animals dying of thirst in various areas in the park. All the engines are slowly being replaced; as a breakdown occurs, a new engine is fitted. While hard work, this keeps the water flowing into the pans.

In August, a windmill was installed on a trial basis at Mbiza Pan to begin experimenting with new energy saving methods with the eventual aim of replacing diesel usage generators. While the pan did not run dry and provided animals with a constant supply of water, it was found that the windmill did not pump as much water as a Lister engine; as such this could be a way forward in the more remote pans. But in terms of diesel and oil consumption and pollution, windmills are more environmentally friendly, simpler to maintain and more cost-effective. In an effective compromise, these can be set up in such a way that in the dry months, when pressure mounts from thirsty wildlife, a Lister engine can be installed and more water can be pumped.

The result of all these efforts – as well as various climatic factors such as a generally good rainfall cycle – over the past 13 years game numbers in the Linkwasha Concession in have shown an increasing trend for almost all species. Such encouraging numbers are testimony to the efforts on the ground of all the teams during sometimes difficult circumstances and it has ensured that this area has remained a wildlife gem able to hold its own with the prime wilderness areas of southern Africa.

South Luangwa Conservation Society

Coordinator: Rachel McRobb

During the wet season in the South Luangwa National Park, there is an increase in poaching in remote areas due to the park's inaccessibility during the rains and the fact that safari bush camps and some lodges close down for this period. To minimise such activities during this time, the South Luangwa Conservation Society (SLCS) takes part in anti-poaching efforts by providing a constant law enforcement presence in the southern section, specifically the Luamfwa and Kapamba areas of the National Park.

During the rains, the Kapamba and Luamfwa areas are well-known sensitive localities and are largely targeted by poachers for big game, specifically elephant and buffalo. This can be seen in that the buffalo population in Luangwa has plummeted by almost 50% in the past ten years, declining from 20 000 to a mere 9 000 animals.

As part of its anti-poaching efforts, village scouts are trained by SLCS and conduct regular anti-snaring patrols and frequent long patrols (ten days each) within the Park and surrounding Game Management Areas (GMAs).

For the past four years, SLCS has been supporting anti-poaching fly camps during the wet season. The fly camps are carefully located in sensitive areas of high poaching pressure. Each is a base from which patrols are deployed, and is equipped with tents, communications equipment and solar equipment. This ensures that the area is covered for 20 days at a time until the changeover group comes in. So far this wet season, the anti-poaching patrols have collected 360 snares along the Lusiwasi River.

SLCS provides all the manpower, scout equipment, logistical support, supervision and coordination for the fly camp programmes; the Trust has funded the entire costs associated with the maintenance of nine fly camps with eight scouts each for 2008/9.

Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit

Coordinator: Charles Brightman

Despite many challenges and hardships, the Victoria Falls Anti Poaching Unit (VFAPU) was able to continue its anti poaching operations throughout 2008.

Poaching has increased in Zimbabwe, with levels of illegal hunting for the bush-meat trade higher than ever due to a combination of political instability, economic hardships, lawlessness and a growing lack of food security. Commercial poachers are also targeting elephants and rhino regularly, selling the tusks and the horns for financial gain.

However, VFAPU has been able to retain 16 scouts through 2008 and, together with members of the National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Republic Police, has conducted a number of successful operations throughout the year, with a number of arrests being made and a continual flow of snares being removed. Due to extensive patrolling by VFAPU scouts since 1999, a total of over 19 000 wire snares have been removed from the bush and destroyed. VFAPU members have been responsible for the continued arrest and apprehension of hundreds of poachers, from ivory dealers to illegal timber merchants.

A number of VFAPU game scouts attended a game scout training course, which has been of immense value. Subjects covered included navigation, discipline and drill, team work, patrol procedures, radio procedure, tourism, tracking, animal ID, law, etc. All the scouts performed very well.

A darting service has once again proved very successful, where mammals observed carrying injuries through snaring are tranquilised, treated and released back into the bush. A number of mammals have been saved from an otherwise painful death.

Completely halting poaching will be impossible unless there is an improvement in the political and economic situation, but the VFAPU continues to effectively patrol the 50 km² operational area on a daily basis. Its presence is being felt and it is hoped that this ultimately is making a discernable difference.

The bush-meat trade currently poses one of the biggest threats facing wildlife in Africa with between 1.9 and 3.5 million tons of bush-meat consumed in Central and Southern Africa annually. Bush-meat hunters often use wire snares, an indiscriminate and inhumane method that catches target species such as wild ungulates, as well as non-target animals such as predators. The suffering caused by these death traps is lengthy and horrific.

Completed Projects

RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

Kunene Community Perceptions Project

Black rhino are increasing in many areas of Namibia, with rhino reintroductions taking place within the species' historical range, many in community conservancies. The Kunene Community Perceptions Project assessed local communities' perceptions towards, and experiences with, the reintroduced black rhino in the ≠Khoadi //Khoas Conservancy and the bordering conservancies (Torra and //Huab Conservancies). Findings showed that people generally have positive attitudes toward the reintroduced black rhino. The only negative perception was that of the black rhino being dangerous and aggressive, possibly connected to the human-elephant conflict in the conservancy over limited water and grazing. Understanding the relationship between the two is critical, ultimately ensuring the success of the reintroduction programme.

Communal Conservancy Black Rhino Relocation

Namibia holds almost a third of all the black rhino remaining in Africa, and 95% of the south-western subspecies. While numbers have increased, the annual population growth rates of the Kunene black rhino have declined. Therefore, a number of translocation and tagging operations were carried out in 2006 and 2007 to expand black rhino range into specific identified areas within communal conservancies. The operation was successful; it is hoped the colonisation of new suitable black rhino habitat will allow increased population growth rates and the continued survival of this endangered subspecies.

Makuleke Large Mammal Reintroduction Project

In 2005, six white rhino were moved from the central district of the Kruger National Park to the Makuleke Concession in the far north. This was followed with daily tracking and monitoring of the animals to gain an understanding of the local ecology of the white rhino in an area from which it has been absent for more than 120 years, and in so doing to provide this information to the broader conservation community. This increased level of understanding can only improve the likelihood of establishing a viable breeding nucleus with the potential to range further into the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park.

Namibian Black Rhino Habitat Assessment

Carried out by MSc. student, Basilia Shivute, this study explored the use of habitat by the black rhino within its range, taking into account plant density, diversity, tree and shrub species composition, and investigated the influence of terrain on both the vegetation and on the black rhino. This study was carried out in the 144 255km2 Kunene Region where tourism has been identified as a key development sector for the region. This study also formed a foundation to guide creation of multiple black rhino habitat suitability models across their historical range to prioritise optimal sites for translocation.

Linyanti Elephant Impact Study

The study confirmed that loss rates of large tree species in the Linyanti vary considerably from year to year – regardless of whether this is as a result of local climatic variation or factors such as elephant browsing – but importantly also emphasised that these loss rates have high variability over longer time periods as well. Additional and longer-term studies in the region are needed to understand exactly what impact the elephants have on the system.

Nyae Nyae Human-Elephant Conflict Research Project

Conflicts between elephants and people are occurring with increasing frequency in Africa, particularly in rural areas on the border of protected regions and specifically at waterholes. The project was developed to help develop effective strategies to reduce human-elephant conflicts in the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, where the Ju/'hoansi people live. The aim was to identify the behavioural, environmental and anthropogenic factors influencing such conflicts in this part of Namibia as a basis for sustainable development and conservation of elephants. One of the key findings of the research was that drinking points for elephants being located further from villages than they are at present may reduce the conflict.

Completed Projects

TFCA Elephant Populations in the Okavango

Working in collaboration with the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks and other partners, this study provided vital information on the abundance, distribution, population structure, habitat needs, and movements of elephants in northern Botswana, and particularly the transboundary movements of elephants within the Okavango-Upper Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area. This data, along with a digital land-cover map and a spatial elephant population model has hopefully provided wildlife managers with tools for developing an elephant management programme for Botswana as well as for the larger Transfrontier Conservation Area.

Kunene Lion Project

Namibia supports a unique population of desert-adapted lions that survive in the harsh Namib Desert. However local communities suffer financial losses when lion prey on their livestock, upon which the lion is often (legally) killed. This project focused on improving the tourism potential of desert-adapted lions and developing a system where its benefits would reach the appropriate communities. A sound understanding of lion ecology and behaviour can lead to increasing the success rate of finding and approaching desert lions by tour operators during game drives, thereby improving their tourism value. A "Lion Fund" was implemented where income from lion-related tourism is managed and used to compensate conservancy members if livestock losses occur.

Lowveld Wild Dog Project

The changes in land tenure in parts of Zimbabwe resulted in the Savé Valley Conservancy in the south-east lowveld of Zimbabwe being a microcosm of the problems facing wild dog conservation over large parts of their geographic range. Finding tools to reduce conflict and promote coexistence between wild dogs and game ranchers and subsistence livestock farmers were the key objectives of the research project.

Kulala Small Carnivore Project

This project, beginning in 2000, studied the habitat, ecology, breeding and feeding habits of small carnivores on the Kulala Wilderness Reserve, including the bat-eared fox. It also focused on the education of farmers and communities about the differences between an aardwolf (an insectivorous small carnivore) and a hyaena. Farmers often kill aardwolves, mistakenly regarding them as threats to their livestock. It is hoped that education will be a way forward in the conservation of this rare small carnivore.

North Island Rehabilitation Project

In 1990, North Island was identified as a potential sanctuary where natural habitats could be transformed and endemic animal and plant species reintroduced. North Island's "Noah's Ark Project" therefore began to achieve the aim of becoming a "host island", that is, a place where species indigenous to the Seychelles, particularly those that are endangered, can be reintroduced and increase in numbers in a safe environment. For this to take place, pest eradication and vegetation rehabilitation (removal of invader plants, remnants of its time as a coconut plantation, and subsequent planting of endemic species) had to take place.

The North Island Rehabilitation Project provides necessary assistance in accelerating the vegetation rehabilitation of the island by adding casual labour to the resident Landscape Team, and in 2007 supported the introduction and subsequent monitoring of Seychelles White-eyes, a critically endangered endemic bird species, in support of the Government's management programme to safeguard the survival of this species. In July 2007, after nearly ten years of intensive rehabilitation, 25 Seychelles White-Eyes, around 8% of the world's population, were released on North Island.

The Seychelles White-Eye Introduction was made possible through the funding of the Annenberg Foundation. The Annenberg Foundation exists to advance the public wellbeing through improved communication. As the principal means of achieving its goal, the Foundation encourages the development of more effective ways to share ideas and knowledge. The Annenberg Foundation has offices in Radnor, PA and Los Angeles, CA. www.annenbergfoundation.org

Completed Projects

Cape Griffon Vulture Project

The Cape Griffon Vulture Project, run by the Rare & Endangered Species Trust (REST), monitors Namibia's most endangered resident bird species. REST is the first organisation in Africa to fit satellite telemetry to vultures. The resulting assessment is that poisons have the largest single fatal impact on raptors and scavengers and it is vital that land-use managers are informed of the negative impact of their use in both the short and long term. Overall, the Cape Griffon Vulture population in Namibia is stabilising, with concurrent success with major awareness campaigns by REST.

Monitoring of Bird Populations at Lake Ngami

Bird counts were done twice a week between April and May 2004, after which the Lake began to fill with water. The Project took note of both numbers and species and costs were shared between the Trust and Wetlands International. The end result was that the importance of the area was officially recognised and declared a 'no-hunting' area.

Busanga Aerial Census 2007

An aerial census of the extended Busanga Plains area (150 000 ha) in northern Kafue National Park, Zambia, was conducted in September 2007. The census was undertaken to provide accurate baseline data of large mammal and bird populations on the Busanga Plains during the dry season and produce an analysis of numbers and distribution of these key species. 21 large mammal species were recorded. Detailed population estimates and average herd sizes were obtained for large ungulates such as Lichtenstein's hartebeest (227), lechwe (2 098), puku (1 888) and wildebeest (1 119). The number of Wattled Cranes estimated (402) suggested that this is area is one the top five most significant wetland sites in Africa.

Chitabe Fire Ecology Research Project

This project studied the impacts of fire on small mammal populations in the Delta. The study team monitored the populations of small mammals of six grassland species, both before and after fire. Results showed that the immediate effect of a fire is drastic with complete emigration from the area; none of the study individuals that were present before were ever recaptured afterwards. However, within a few months new individuals of some of the species began to arrive, with some species recovering quicker than others.

Liwonde National Park Aerial Census

A helicopter aerial game census of Liwonde National Park (LNP), Malawi, has taken place on an annual basis since 2006, making 2008 the third consecutive year of this research. The results and conclusions have clarified the movements of elephants out of the Park, the extent of illegal activities in both LNP and the adjoining Mangochi Forest Reserve, and the population increase of various species. Most importantly, the census provided crucial baseline data for the management of Liwonde National Park; regular censuses are becoming a critical management tool for the effective running of the Park. The Trust has been a pivotal part of funding these since their inception.

Mana Pools Tree Conservation Project

The project looked at the decline of the tall albida trees (*Faidherbia albida*, known also as the ana tree) that line the banks of the Zambezi River in the Mana Pools National Park. Possible causes of the decline include elephant feeding, part of a natural cycle or change in the Zambezi's flood patterns.

Skeleton Coast Lichen Project

A ground survey of all lichen communities in a 3 000-km^2 concession of the Skeleton Coast Park in the northern Namib Desert assessed the long-term impacts of human activity on lichens and the Namib Desert ecosystem as a whole. The project contributed greatly to the management plan of the Skeleton Coast Park as well as an increased awareness of the role played by lichen in stabilising fragile desert soil and the threat that human activities present to this delicate environment.

Completed Projects

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND EDUCATION

Educational Bursary 2006

Gayle Pederson submitted her Master's thesis at the end of 2008. Below is a summary:
This project, which saw the reintroduction of a number of large mammals into Pafuri (Kruger National Park), commenced in 2005, with the initiation of a white rhino behaviour study in 2006. Findings, after a year of tracking the rhino daily and a year of analysing their diet composition from faecal samples, as well as movements across the landscapes from GPS data recorded, confirmed that Pafuri is a suitable habitat for this metapopulation of white rhino. At their current rate of increase the available grazing and surface water is sufficient to maintain the population, although future interventions may need to be considered if their genetic diversity is to continue.

Grass species consumed were consistent with the majority of white rhino studies, apart from a couple of exceptions that were indicative of the drier northern climate in this area of low rainfall. They showed a distinct difference in landscape preferences between the dry and wet seasons, with most ranges and territories focused around the permanent water sources. The project was concluded with some management considerations for the future of this group of rhino in Pafuri, and the success of three new births since their reintroduction.

Makuleke Small Business Support

The Makuleke Small Business Support Company (SBSC) is a joint venture between the Makuleke Community Property Association (CPA) and Wilderness Safaris to encourage, support and diversify tourism related enterprise. The CPA is the landholder both in and outside of the Kruger, whilst Wilderness Safaris is a concessionaire in the Makuleke Contract Park that attaches to the Kruger National Park. Through the Trust, an ITC station (Information Technology and Communications Station) was set up with PCs connected to the Internet for training of community-based enterprises in the tourism industry and to support the various environmental resource use programmes and activities over the longer term. The ITC stations would also be used for education and learning and will link to the Makuleke Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC) being developed in conjunction with Earthwatch. This includes links to national channel learning, adult basic education and vocational courses such as in conservation and tour guiding.

Mkambati School Programmes

A combination of donations from the Trust and private sponsors saw significant improvements in two schools in the Pondoland area in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. Additional funds from private individuals through the Trust have allowed these schools to be completed with regard to buildings and equipment. The schools included Mkambati Junior Secondary School, sponsored by family and friends of Bruna Zacks, and Zimisele School, sponsored by the Ultimate Travel Company UK. These donations have improved the quality of education in this poverty-stricken area.

ANTI-POACHING AND MANAGEMENT

Savé Conservancy Bush-Meat Survey

This project focused on the extent and impact of the bush-meat trade in Savé Valley Conservancy (SVC). Its goals were to develop tools to reduce the impact of snaring, by addressing the underlying causes for the bush-meat trade and enhancing the ability of the conservancy to protect its wildlife. Preliminary data showed that in parts of the conservancy, illegal off-takes are unsustainable. In a year, 9 239 snares resulting in the death of 869 animals were removed from SVC by anti-poaching scouts. However, the data also highlighted that incidences of illegal hunting tend to occur in predictable patterns, both in time and space. By predicting these patterns, anti-poaching scout patrols can be deployed more effectively.

Make a difference to Africa

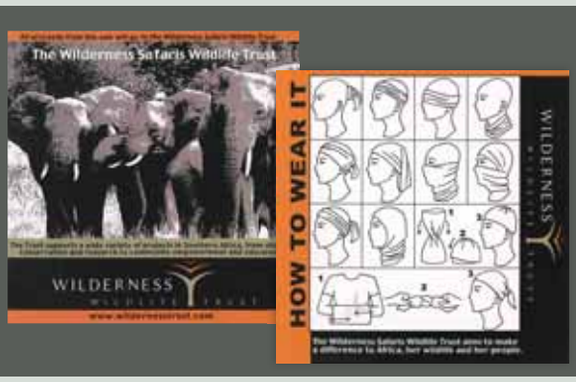
www.wildernesstrust.com/trust/donations.jsp

Easy method to donate monies to the Trust:
Africa's conservation needs are enormous and in urgent need of money and logistical support. The Trust is therefore grateful for all donations received either for specific projects or those donated in general to be used wherever they are needed most.

If you would like to assist us in these efforts, please contact Mari dos Santos at marid@wilderness.co.za or telephone +27 11 257 5057

Donations from the USA can also take place via the Resources First Foundation. This facility is tax-deductible through a 501c facility and levies an administration fee. Its online donations facility can be found via our website: www.wildernesstrust.com/trust/donations.jsp. Contact Laura Mass at lmass@resourcesfirstfoundation.org or +1 207-221-2753 for more details.

About Resources First Foundation:
The Wilderness Safaris Wildlife Trust is supported by the Resources First Foundation (RFF), a non-profit organisation formed to promote and design conservation and education tools and solutions to promote conservation and restoration activities for fish, wildlife and other natural resources primarily on privately owned lands across the United States and in southern Africa. Many community-based and private landowner conservation techniques and policies were first initiated and developed in a number of countries in southern Africa. Because the Foundation's financial resources are relatively small, grants will be made only upon the invitation of the Foundation's officers and board. An area of grant-making focus includes training and education programmes for wildlife professions and innovative wildlife restoration projects (from the tagging of marine turtles to the reintroduction of white rhinoceros). Donations via RFF are tax-deductible in the USA.



Wilderness Trust Warmer:
One of the Trust's exciting and practical fundraising initiatives for 2009 is the "Wilderness Trust Warmer", the costs of which have been generously covered by Wilderness Safaris. In return for a donation of US$20, guests at Wilderness Safaris camps receive this versatile and stylish headwear that has a multitude of practical applications for use on safari. All proceeds accrue to the Trust and will be ploughed back into conservation projects in southern Africa.

Acknowledgements and Donors

Thanks to the generosity of many donors over the past year, we have achieved some notable successes in the conservation of animal and plant species, a furthering of knowledge of ecosystems and the ongoing engagement of neighbouring communities. We would like to thank all our donors in this regard.

The Trust is dependent on funds donated by individuals and we applaud those committed individuals who have undertaken to raise funds of their own accord. Such people include many who have cycled, run or walked for our conservation and community projects.

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Errata from the 2008 Report: Mango African Safaris – Casey Gamba, Pioneer Africa – Roualeyn de Haas, Solaris Expeditions

Photographs by: Dana Allen, Grant Atkinson, Martin Benadie, Willem Botha, James Bradley, Charles Brightman, Children in the Wilderness, Kai Collins, Clive Dreyer, R. Fusel, Courtney Johnson, Walter Jubber, Peter Lindsey, Mike Myers, The River Club, Brian Rode, Callum Sargent, Mike & Anne Scott.

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