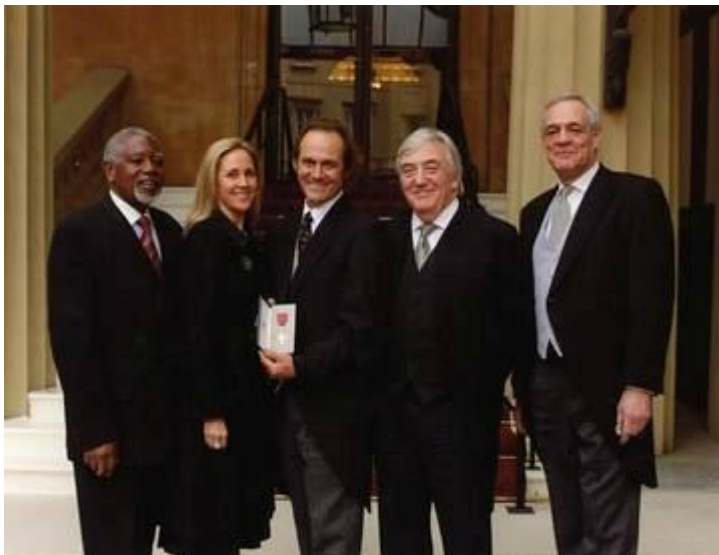


## Mkomazi report 2007

By any standards, it has been a remarkable and fulfilling year for the project with much progress and development. There are always challenges of course but a quick round up of activities shows just how much has been happening:

- The Tanzanian Trust signed a new 4 year agreement with the Government
- TANAPA are actively upgrading the Reserve to National Park (NP) status
- to everybody's delight there were 2 new rhino births bringing the total to 3
- small releases of wild dogs have finally started into selected habitat
- a luxury tented camp is now operational testing the tourism potential
- major upgrades have been achieved, and continue, in the surrounding community schools
- if all that was not enough Tony was awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to wildlife in East Africa.



Fitz holding his OBE after the ceremony at Buckingham Palace. From left: Brigadier General Hashim Mbita, Lucy and Tony Fitzjohn, Bob Marshall Andrews QC and Andrew Mortimer

There is no doubt that NP status and the recognition of Tony's achievements have combined to give the project greatly enhanced credibility. We see this in different ways – increased media attention, increased and more diverse financial support and, critically, a great sense of commitment and pride on the part of all the Tanzanians on camp as well as the Wildlife Division of the Government of Tanzania; two senior members of the Wildlife Division attended

a reception given by the British High Commissioner at his residence in Dar es Salaam in recognition of Tony's award

### Nina

We are sad to report that Nina, the elephant successfully released into Mkomazi after 27 years in captivity, has died. Many will remember her from the documentary of her release fronted by Martin Clunes. Four years ago she gave birth to a calf, named Jonny Wilkinson, on the day that England won the rugby world cup. It seems

that she died during the attempted birth of her second calf and was found dead by Tony one morning recently. Wildlife is often unpredictable but at least she had ten very good years of freedom

## Management

Good working relations continue with Mr Lusasi, the Project Manager of MGR. In the field, the dams and water pans that have been de-silted by GAWPT and the Wildlife Division (WD) held exceptionally good amounts of water, backed-up further by the long rains between October 06 and June 07. These rains represent an extraordinary change for us. Mkomazi means 'Danger – no water' in Pare language and yet every 10 years this place is transformed by a steady drenching. This has resulted in lush vegetation and an increase in animal numbers. With the permanent security outposts built and manned by GAWPT in strategic areas in the reserve, the increasing numbers of wildlife give us all encouragement for the future. The rains also washed out many of the road networks, so GAWPT deployed plant machinery and staff to re-construct these roads with murram, a lengthy and intensive task.

As always, cattle incursions and meat poaching are an ongoing problem. The roof of the security outpost at Kamakota was burnt down, huge fires raged in parts of the reserve in the dry season and GAWPT personnel undertook de-snaring patrols, sometimes coming back to camp with at least 300 snares. TFJ flew regularly on aircraft patrol with relay of information back to the Zange HQ and also backed up the Arusha anti-poaching and MGR rangers on patrol. Kenya Wildlife Service operating in Tsavo West National Park under Senior Warden Danny Woodley continue to visit to discuss joint operations.

Plant and machinery, vehicles and the aircraft are the foundation of field work. The Cessna 206, the JCBs, the grader, tractor and trailer, slashers and dam scoops are permanently working and are the core of the operation. We would like to thank TUSK, IFAW, Suzuki Rhino Club, WSPA and JCB for providing the equipment, vehicles and running costs. New equipment enables us to decommission the very old vehicles which put such pressure on the workshop.

George Mavroudis opened the first tented camp in MGR; "Babu's Camp" is situated in between Zange HQ and Kisima Camp and has so far served well the small yet slowly increasing tourist industry looking for areas off the northern circuits.

Tony and our Trustees here held meetings with both the Director of Wildlife and the

Director General of TANAPA to discuss the Trust's position within Mkomazi during and after the handover. Separate board meetings were held in Dar es Salaam on future strategy and method and we are extremely grateful to the Trustees for their advice and guidance.

MWEKA College for African Wildlife Management send in at least 4 groups of students annually to see the work and challenges that have been undertaken in the field and it is always a privilege to share information with them, for they are the future custodians of Tanzania's wildlife. One of our original UK Trustees, Major Bruce Kinloch, MC, was one of the founders of MWEKA and the Major Kinloch Hall is the central building at the college.

*Dear Tony & Lucy*

*This is to again thank you for your continued commitments to work with us in Tanzania in achieving our everlasting country natural resources conservation goal. Indeed your contributions in natural resources conservation in and around the Mkomazi Game Reserve, and more so the conservation of the most endangered species the African Hunting Dog and the Rhinoceros.*

*Our Recent field-training visit (Mweka 94 students and 4 Lecturers on 18/3/2007) to Mkomazi and in particular the wild dog-breeding centre and Rhino sanctuary was rewarding. Tony's talk was even more encouraging as it emphasized on challenges awaiting future wildlife managers. We were able to learn a great deal from your field experiences. Both students and college staff insisted I should thank you on their behalf and request you to share the same knowledge to future college groups that may visit the centre.*

*Wishing you all success.*

*Wilfred A. Foya (Senior Lecturer)*

*College of African Wildlife Management – Mweka*

## **Rhino**

Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary continues to operate on a highly professional level, with a loyal and disciplined staff. Security systems, communications, patrols and maintenance are the main-stay of daily life and these disciplines have so far served the sanctuary well. Semu Pallangyo and Philbert Shindano deserve huge credit for

their part in the operational success of the sanctuary. The WD continue to send in the Selous rhino rangers to be given operational training by sanctuary personnel.

Charlie, a female who arrived in 1997, gave birth to a male calf named Hashim. Already distinguished as an aggressive rhino, the guardianship of her calf kept the personnel on red alert. Unfortunately she knocked Evans out of her way when he disturbed her sleeping by mistake, and her horn punctured his lung. We air evacuated him to hospital and he has recovered and is back on duty.

The rhino have thrived on the lush vegetation, and were only glimpsed through intensive endeavour by the tracking team throughout the eight months of rain. As the rains slowly dried up, the rhino emerged from the bush to come and drink at the exposed water pans. We were delighted to see that Marina, a female who arrived in 2001, had given birth to a male calf! Three out of our four females have bred which is a great endorsement of the programme. The other rhino are in excellent condition. Our priority remains to increase the founder population of rhino in the sanctuary to 12 initially, and also to start an extension of the sanctuary in an area where the mothers and calves like to browse. Both of these objectives represent major challenges, in terms of fundraising, politics and hard labour, but they are our main concerns for the next year.

Yet with all the success comes the tragedy. With great dismay we received reports that Elvis had fallen onto his side, a very serious down-turn for a rhino. He had been previously injured in ferocious fights with the two other males and had therefore been separated into his own section by Dr Pete Morkel. After getting up and falling down again, rhino sanctuary personnel hand-fed him and kept him propped up in the normal sleeping position (legs tucked under him). He died a day later, an extremely distressing event. Rhinos do kill each other and, however much we protect them from poachers, we can't always protect them from each other.

The US Fish & Wildlife funded borehole has been activated and pumps water. Although this is of fairly poor quality it is still is a good back up. The Scania (with a new engine) and the Bedford continue their safaris to fill the water storage tanks. These tanks came under attack from elephants in the dry season, so deep ditches have been dug with ramps placed in strategic places for the elephants to climb out, should they venture down. The MRS is a heavy responsibility. It is a flagship conservation project for Tanzania and our success to date has been due to the quality of personnel in the field and the apparatus that supports GAWPT. A quick snapshot of the last year's support shows the good will towards the rhino project :

- SUZUKI / B V NIMAG and Ted van Dam who support the crucial day to day management of the sanctuary through the Suzuki Rhino Club and their consistent corporate fundraising initiatives.
- TUSK, IFAW, RUFFORD MAURICE LAING and SWORDSPPOINT FOUNDATION who support the burden of salaries, fuel and plant machinery.
- SAVE THE RHINO, who together EAZA Campaign raised funds for a new Massey Ferguson Tractor
- SRI and CHESTER ZOO supported fence-post replacement; SRI and Born Free provided funds for a new Scania engine.
- FRIENDS OF SERENGETI SWITZERLAND who provided the generator for the new water pump.

Tony continued to hold meetings with the authorities on increasing the founder population of rhino, although during this transition time between game reserve and NP we are at a midpoint between the two and have to deal with all the accompanying sensitivities. The rhino metapopulation of the Tsavo/Mkomazi ecosystem is already an integral component of Tanzania's and Kenya's efforts to recover and breed up viable populations of *D.b.michaeli* over the next few decades.

## Wild dogs

All the wild dogs are in good health. Reintroduction is now the priority as we have reached the end of the vaccination research and the dogs breed well in captivity. We have started another breeding compound with what was previously a beta group living amongst alphas, bringing the total of breeding groups up to five. However, we have recently lost an alpha female aged 8 years.

Mr Lusasi gave us permission to build a new reintroduction compound in an area of rocky outcrops near the border with Tsavo NP. We re-cleared the tracks and roads around this area yet it is still a wild and hidden place for the dogs with great potential. The Tsavo National Park authorities have said they would welcome the presence of wild dogs in the ecosystem. The first group of 9 males (all brothers) were moved over there and two fitted with telemetry collars. They were held for a few weeks and then released. They have successfully hunted since release in that area and are being monitored daily.

We also undertook two small reintroductions in the rhino sanctuary, one with immediate success – the group of brothers who hunted within the first 24 hours – and the two sisters who we released onto two wild males. For some reason this

group did not remain as a cohesive unit and split up. The two females were seen for many months near camp and the male (now down to one) still lives around our camp. This demonstrates the highly complex nature of wild dog reintroductions and the careful planning, care and consideration with which they need to be carried out.

Meanwhile, two groups of wild dogs circled our camp for a few months and then moved on. They can be enigmatic in the bush and it is interesting to see over the years the amount of wild and hidden roaming packs that have come near the breeding compounds through unknown routes and origins.

The basic vaccination programme continued, and we were delighted when Dr Nick de Souza from the regional office of the World Society for the Protection of Animals successfully took over the process to bring in the specialized vaccine manufactured by Merial that has proved effective against canine distemper in the dogs.

As always, our sincerest thanks go to George and Natasha Duffield who have supported the costs of this project for many years and are the reason behind our ability to professionally carry out and manage this programme. And to Olly and Suzi who continue to promote the plight of the wild dogs.

Recently the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation supported the re-introduction costs for this year and the Swordspoint Foundation in the USA gave a general donation to the programme. Longleat Safari Park gave a donation of medicines and a new blowpipe.

Dr Aart Visee retired as veterinary supervisor after 10 years of extraordinary commitment to the programme. He is still involved on an advisory and in his position as Chairman of the African Wild Dog Foundation, and we would like to express our great thanks to him for so many years of immaculate veterinary work, reports, academic research and advice. We hope that our findings and data will be of use to those involved in the preservation of this critically endangered species. Dr Peter Morkel has taken over as veterinary supervisor. We were also pleased to welcome and exchange ideas with Peter Blistone from Greg Rasmussen's wild dog programme in Zimbabwe.

The keepers - Sangito, Ayubu and Ombeni - maintain the extensive daily routines and attentive care of the dogs.

## Trust, trustees, travel and supporters

The past year has seen many fundraising trips abroad, Trust board meetings internationally and visits to the project by trustees and treasurers. Events have been held in the UK, Holland and the USA to raise the critical funds to keep the whole project in operation and we are grateful to everyone who has given their time to this massive undertaking.

In Tanzania, we were honored to welcome Rose Lugembe as a board member. A new Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Trust, the Ministry of Natural Resources & Tourism and the Ministry of Finance. The Chairman, Trustees and Tony held meetings with the Director of Wildlife, Wildlife Division personnel and the Director General of National Parks to begin to establish the Trust's position under the new bureaucracy.

Tony was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to wildlife in East Africa and we attended the investiture by HRH Prince Charles with Brigadier General Hashim Mbita, Bob Marshall Andrews and Andrew Mortimer. HRH Princess Michael of Kent, as Patron of GAWPT, kindly continues to give her support.

Representatives from the Board of Tanapa visited the project, as did the Regional Commissioner Kilimanjaro, Mohamedi Babu, and the District Commissioner Same, Ibrahimu Marwa.

Through TUSK, we were visited by the keepers from Longleat Safari Park and a film crew for the series Animal Park.

As always we would like to thank Mazao / Neumanns Coffee Group and Indigo Telecoms for sponsoring communications, as well as Bill Savoy, Ed and Liberty Zwick, Moritz and Hilla Borman, Mark Shanker, Pete Wakeham and Tim Peet for general funding.

None of our work would be possible without the extraordinary commitment and loyalty of our Tanzanian staff, under Elisaria Nnko. Their reputation as one of the most hard-working and professional teams in wildlife conservation is fully deserved. They carry the mantle and responsibility of this project with integrity and determination and we are privileged to work alongside them:

- Elisaria Nnko – Operations Manager Wilfred Ayo – Workshop / Technical Manager
- Semu Pallangyo – Rhino Sanctuary Manager
- Philbert Shindano – i/c Rhino Sanctuary Security
- Simeon Tumbo – Rhino Sanctuary Fence Maintenance Manager
- Penieli Elia and Evans Goodlack – Rhino Sanctuary Tracking Team Managers
- Sangito Lema – Wild Dog Head Keeper

The next few years will bring with them serious challenges as we move towards National Parks. The Trust has a wide range of disciplines to carry out encompassing habitat restoration, infrastructural development, the expansion of the rhino sanctuary both in terms of rhino numbers and area, ongoing breeding and reintroduction of wild dogs and the continuation of outreach work.

Needless to say, the project will always need increasing financial support so we look forward to maintaining close contacts with all those individuals and organizations who believe in the project as well as developing new funding sources.

## Outreach

As a small wildlife charity with a wide range of disciplines, we are proud of our outreach programme and the assistance that we have given to the local communities. Over the past year the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust in Germany (GAWeV) has been actively raising funds for upgrading schools and we would like to thank Simone Motzko for her help with this. GAWeV has donated money for roofing sheets for the Kankokoro Secondary School (a new school from a merger between the Ndungu Secondary and Kihurio Secondary Schools), cement and roofing sheets for the Kivingo Primary School and the Lunguza Secondary School. Simone also visited with a film crew and actor Erol Sandler to officially hand over the building materials and to make a short documentary to promote the outreach programme in Germany and the Von Langsdorffs have also agreed to assist with PR and our website.

GAWPT in the UK raised funds from a charitable foundation for cement and roofing sheets for a further six primary and secondary schools spread over Same, Mwanga and Lushoto Districts. Currently we have donated cement and roofing sheets to Vudee Secondary School, Marindi Suji Secondary School, Shighatini Secondary School and Pangaro Primary School. Suji Secondary School told Elisaria that this was the largest donation they had ever received. We have also made further donations of



cement to Kivingo Primary School and Lunguza Secondary School in Lushoto District and Mapanda Secondary School, Mkomazi Village in Korogwe District.

GAWeV has also raised the funds for the construction of the Hedaru Secondary School library (cement bricks, walling cement and roofing sheets).

The Headmaster has already funded timber, labour costs, painting and electrical fittings, so this joint project should be completed within the year.

GAWPT has also donated building cement for the Roman Catholic Secondary School in Same, and building materials for the Same District Council rest house. We have helped Kisiwani Secondary School with the use of our tractor to bring in building sand for more classrooms. The borehole and water pump funded by GAWPT and the WD at Zange HQ continues to provide water twice weekly to the villagers of Majevu.

Tony and Elisaria have held continuous discussion with the new District Commissioner of Same, Ibrahimu Marwa, and we have kept in close communication on all outreach initiatives. Elisaria has also been in discussion with the District Commissioner and District Administrative Secretary of Mwanga District and Lushoto District.

Representatives from GAWPT have taken stalls on the Same Exhibition Days to show the people of Same the work of the Trust.

#### Environmental Education Programme

GAWPT, TUSK, Save the Rhino and Chester Zoo have joined forces to fundraise for our new Environmental Education (EE) Programme. A fundraising dinner was held in London by SRI and TUSK to get the project off the ground and provide running costs in the early years. The evening was a great success and we are grateful to all those who helped put it all together.

GAWPT will send the EE Officer and the bus out to the villages to talk to school children and community groups about their environment, the Mkomazi Project and wildlife conservation, particularly black rhino. GAWPT will also facilitate visits by schools to MGR and MRS. TUSK, having benefited from charitable fundraising in the City of London have paid for the bus which has been built to our specification in Kenya and has recently arrived in Tanzania. In the meantime, one of our personnel has been trained as a bus driver!! With TUSK's help again, we received a donation

from elephant.co.uk which is enabling us to construct a wonderful education centre (pictured) in the MRS where the school children can watch films (audio-visuals donated by TUSK/Vodafone Pace) and be taught about conservation initiatives as well as seeing MRS personnel at work. The bus is being painted in traditional Tanzanian 'tinga-tinga' style. Our partners are contributing to the strategy framework, educational materials, inter-active activities and running costs for the whole programme. Elisaria has visited Laikipia Wildlife Forum with Mark Pilgrim and Maggie Esson of Chester Zoo to see how a similar programme is being run.

The overall EE Programme has been and continues to be developed for the benefit of local communities, especially the school children, as through this initiative they can be actively involved in local environmental issues and wildlife.

Finally, with great enthusiasm Mandy Swanne has designed and established an interactive and educational blog called Dotty Rhino, aimed at children but enjoyed by adults.