

The George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust

2005 was an extraordinary year for The Mkomazi Project and the work of the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trusts in the field.



The Government of Tanzania officially upgraded Mkomazi Game Reserve to National Park status and the hand-over to Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) commenced; a baby rhino was born in the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary; wild dog numbers recovered to 50 and the vaccination research was concluded; infrastructure development in the reserve continued apace, with ongoing roadwork, building of permanent ranger outposts in the field, dam de-silting, aircraft patrols and the successful application of a tourist operator to build a tented camp in the reserve; the outreach work in the communities broadened its scope with educational and water projects and HRH Princess Michael of Kent became the Patron of the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust in the UK.

Running alongside these developments was a set of major challenges, and we thank our Chairmen, Trustees, friends and colleagues for all their advice and support. Brigadier General (Retd) Hashim Mbita, Bernard Mchomvu and Charles Dobie continued to steer the project with clarity and wisdom and, as always, we are grateful for their guidance.

When the Wildlife Division and the Trust undertook The Mkomazi Project in 1988, a long and daunting task lay ahead. The rehabilitation of a devastated piece of land to its eventual recognition as one of Tanzania's National Parks, the rehabilitation of two of Africa's most endangered species and the pressing need to provide assistance to the communities surrounding the game reserve combined to represent a daunting project. It required not only a concentration of limited resources to the best effect, but also the renewal, revival and reversal of the damage of the previous years.



We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this project for helping us take it to this stage, for without such support it could not have been accomplished. On every level, the success this project enjoys has been a direct result of the voluntary support and goodwill of very many people.

There still remains much to be done, and we hope we can rely on your support as the next stage unfolds.



On June 20th 2005, we received a radio call giving us long awaited news...

Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary

...Rose, one of the females from the original translocation in 1997, had given birth to a calf. Following a moment of stunned silence, we all breathed a collective sigh of relief. Our rather premature excitement soon turned to consternation, however. Another of the females from the first translocation, Charlie, (who has been described by Dr Piet Morkel as one of the most aggressive rhinos he has ever come across), had met the calf at a water hole and had tossed it into the air. This happened a couple of times, with the calf being thrown so forcefully that it did complete somersaults in the air, whilst the rhino sanctuary personnel dashed forward, risking their lives, to stop Charlie. The solution was to prevent Charlie meeting the calf at this particular water hole, so all the existing water pans were filled up daily from then on. Paradoxically, Charlie, Rose and the calf often browse together, but it did throw into question the possibility of a previous calf mortality, although we shall never know.

Despite these unscheduled acrobatics, the calf is in excellent health and it is monitored closely. Dr Piet Morkel visits regularly to check up on her. She is called Suzi! Ted Van Dam, the Managing Director of B V Nimag representing Suzuki in The Netherlands, started a Suzuki Rhino Club to support the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary, so we asked him to name her.

Elvis, one of the males from the second translocation, needed to be sedated for treatment to wounds he sustained through fighting. These wounds were deteriorating through further fights and general bashing around. Dr Piet Morkel flew in with Peter and Stella Hitchins to work on Elvis. We would like to thank Frankfurt Zoological Society, for whom Dr Morkel works as technical advisor, for supporting his visits to Mkomazi.

Security systems were given a further boost when TUSK and the Born Free Foundation donated uniports for the external security outposts. TUSK also sourced army boots for sanctuary personnel. Extra anti-poaching training was given by Ian Maxwell. IFAW funded wages and fuel for the machines operating in the rhino sanctuary. Again, TUSK and the Born Free Foundation responded to a cry for help and donated a rotary grass slasher for road and fence-line maintenance. Chester Zoo and Save the Rhino funded a major replacement of fence posts, as did Edith Brinkers.



Mkomazi Game Reserve management and infrastructure development

We have the great fortune to work alongside Mr Lusasi, the Wildlife Division's Project Manager of MGR. Together with him, the Wildlife Division and the Trust have shouldered the responsibility of developing the infrastructure of the reserve, and thereby satisfying the Government's criteria for National Park status. We are all proud of the achievements of The Mkomazi Project, and look forward to the transition and upgrade to National Park status. During the year, the return of 300 elephant in the Kisima area gave testimony to the relative peace that exists in the reserve.

Brigadier General (Retd) Hashim I Mbita, Charles Dobie and Tony met with the Director of Wildlife, Emmanuel Severre, on a number of occasions to discuss the work in the field and the Trust's position within the transition to National Parks. Our new Agreement has also been presented to the Government of Tanzania.

The Trust machinery was sent out during the year to construct new road networks and maintain old roads. The Fastrac and JCB, donated by Sir Anthony Bamford of JCB, are relied on to

undertake this huge brief, and we would like to thank JCB for providing all the spare parts, enabling us to keep these machines well-maintained and in good condition. The grader was rebuilt in the workshop, an immense job which ultimately high-lighted the skills of the mechanics who are employed by the Trust. We are also grateful to IFAW for providing the much needed fuel for these machines to carry out the work.

In a joint project with the Wildlife Division, we desilted the Kavateta Dam, a massive undertaking, as it had not been properly de-silted for forty years. The Wildlife Division provided the money for fuel and the operator's wages, and the Trust sent in the JCB, with the 10 ton tipping trailer and dam scoop, donated by US Fish & Wildlife. The job was completed in record time and we are awaiting the long rains to see how much water the dam will hold.

Thanks to TUSK and the Born Free Foundation, the Trust was able to construct a permanent ranger outpost in the field at Kamakota. We were also able to upgrade the existing tented ranger outposts at Kifakua and Maore. These outposts are

Ian Maxwell undertook anti-poaching training with the personnel. Thanks to Ted Van Dam and the Suzuki Club in The Netherlands, we now receive a critically important monthly donation towards the day to day running costs of the sanctuary. Bill Savoy visited for two days and generously supported the work, despite being charged by Elvis.

Last year Chester Zoo and Save the Rhino donated funds for the construction of an observation bunker by a major water pan. This has proved to be invaluable for monitoring and observation. The first guests to venture down the steep steps and through the rather flimsy wooden doors were rhinos. Individually, they all spent a couple of hours in there staring out, before climbing back up, at which point a huge steel armoury door was swiftly ordered up and put in place. It is a captivating experience to stand in the bunker and watch these mighty animals drinking in such close proximity, unaware of our presence, although the number of men who dashed out of the bunker to stop Charlie tossing the calf must have given the game away!

The Scania water tanker, donated by HRH Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands and the Friends of Serengeti, trundles over to the Zange HQ every day to collect water for the rhino sanctuary. This is an arduous and costly journey, so US Fish & Wildlife donated funds for a hydro-geophysical survey and subsequent drilling and sinking of a borehole in the rhino sanctuary area. Three holes were drilled but we found that only one had small / poor potential. It still has to be pump-tested but it was somewhat disappointing, especially as the rains failed this year.

Tony made a presentation to the Suzuki dealers in The Netherlands to encourage their support, and a group of 85 of them visited in early 2006. Ted Van Dam organised a group of 40 Suzuki motorbike dealers to visit the project in 2005, all on motorbikes, and they gave a very generous donation. Tony also met with James Osborne and Amos Courage of the Port Lympne Wildlife Park in England who hold the correct sub-species of rhino (D.b.michaeli) to continue discussion of the possibility of a translocation to Mkomazi. The conservation director and chief curator of Chester Zoo, Roger Wilkinson and Mark Pilgrim, visited with Dave Stirling of Save the Rhino and we were delighted to be able to show them the progress that has taken place.

We continue to be very grateful to everyone who has contributed towards the professional management of the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary. We have repeatedly received congratulations from so many colleagues both on the project and the dedication and integrity of the sanctuary personnel. We are grateful to Semu Pallangyo who oversees the day to day operations.



staffed by trust personnel but are also to be used by Wildlife Division personnel during ranger patrols. The outposts provide much needed security in three different areas of the reserve, as well as providing external security for the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary.

Aircraft back-up with the Trust's Cessna 206, as well as vehicle fuel, were provided for the WD ranger patrols. HRH Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands funded the aircraft insurance, for which we were extremely grateful.

The Kenya Wildlife Services warden from Tsavo West National Park flew in for discussions with Mr Lusasi and Tony on the broader scope of patrols. Nick McWilliam, currently working on

the British Antarctic Expedition, came back to Mkomazi to update the GPS map of the reserve. MWEKA College for African Wildlife Management brought students in on three occasions for talks and field trips with the Trust personnel. It was a great pleasure to welcome Mr Musa Lyimo with the MWEKA students.

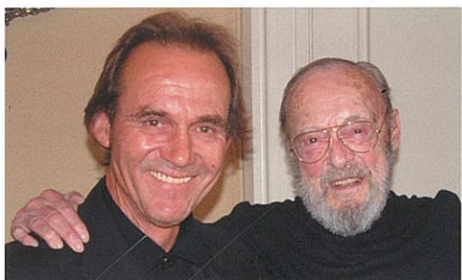
And onto tourism... George and Deb Mavroudis successfully applied to the Wildlife Division to build a tented camp in Mkomazi. This is a project that has needed tenacity and we are grateful to them for their perseverance. They have always been supportive of the goals of The Mkomazi Project and the work of Mr Lusasi and the Trust. The future of Mkomazi lies in its ability to become self-sustaining and we hope that this first step attracts the confidence and support of the tourist market.



Trusts, trustees, travel & supporters



It has been a period of great loss. Very sadly, the Patron of the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust in Holland, HRH Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands, died at the age of 93. PB, as he liked to be known, met Tony back in 1978 and the award to Tony by PB of the Golden Ark was a mark of a long standing friendship. He was also very generous to the project with financial support in several critical areas.



Shortly before going to print, we were devastated to learn of the death of Dr Keith Eltringham in January. Chairman of GAWPT for over 20 years, his support and knowledge as Professor of Zoology at Cambridge University was unsurpassed and we shall miss him greatly as an expert and as a friend. He was always a voice of reason and his confidence in Tony and the project never wavered.

One of our Trustees in Tanzania, Costa Mlay, has also died. Costa was an extraordinary conservationist and a great help to our work in Mkomazi. He was a former Director of Wildlife and was a principal force in upgrading the elephant onto Appendix 1 of the endangered species list.

Tony was invited by TUSK to give the 10th anniversary AMEX presentation at the Royal Geographical Society in London. He also took part in a discussion forum on wildlife with Olly and Suzi at the Royal Institution in London. Trust board meetings took place in the UK, USA, Kenya, Germany, Holland and Tanzania and Tony travelled to Harare to visit the Chairman of our Tanzanian Trust, Brigadier General (Retd) Hashim I Mbita, Tanzania's Ambassador to Zimbabwe.

We were all thrilled and honoured when HRH Princess Michael of Kent officially became the Patron of the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust in England. Princess Michael has been extremely supportive of the work of the Trust for many years and has given invaluable help, not only in enhancing the profile of the Trust but also enabling us to broaden our fundraising base. She has visited camp on a number of occasions and we look forward to seeing her again in the future.



There are many organisations and individuals, world wide, who support us financially or in materials and advice. We can probably never thank them all properly but we are grateful for their input in whatever form it takes.

Thanks must also go to our Operations Manager, Elisaria Nnko, and all the Tanzanians who work here, out in the field, in the base camp, workshop, rhino sanctuary, wild dog programme or outreach programme, whose dedication and commitment to this project is unparalleled.



Sincere thanks go to the Chairmen, Treasurers, Trustees, Board Directors and Administrators of all the Trusts, whose guidance and support has taken the project forwards to the formidable undertaking that it is today.



A last word

Nina, the elephant we rehabilitated to the wild after 27 years in a zoo, is now 36 years old. Her calf, Jonny Wilkinson (born on the day that England won the Rugby World Cup), is over 2 years old and in very good health. In the dry season, they are accompanied by 5 males who come with them to drink from the water pan in the workshop. A world first!

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