The George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust

newsletter 2008/2009

Mkomazi National Park (MNP)

The signboard is up, an outcome that was a distant vision 20 years ago when the Government of Tanzania (GoT) asked the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust (GAWPT) to join with them on a programme of rehabilitation of a long-degraded area with Tony at the helm.

The Mkomazi Project

Semu Pallangyo, Manager, Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary, on patrol

From left: Mkomazi National Park – new sign board. Sunbird – David Pluth. Giraffe – David Pluth. Nina's male calf with the adult bull elephant.

TANAPA have taken over the administration of the park; a new General Management Plan will be prepared; tourism is slowly increasing and will open up under TANAPA; back-up to the management and infrastructural development continues; rhinos are doing well, as you can see, although there is a clear need to bring in more to reach the viable founder population; wild dogs are still breeding and reintroductions have been a 60% success; a further nine primary and secondary schools have been assisted and the environmental education programme has been a great success with an impact on the pupils substantially beyond expectations.

As with most wildlife field-work, the rules are basic; keep working, keep maintaining, keep planning and keep it simple. Whichever discipline is being attended to, everything is based around practicality. We are immensely proud of our Tanzanian work-force, most of whom have been trained by Tony, who handle the huge responsibility of the work here in Mkomazi at every level. It must be time to write a summary document on how Tony, supported by all the Trusts, undertook The Mkomazi Project with the GoT, yet how does one quantify the integrity and loyalty of the Tanzanian personnel, the workshop burden, the construction work, the politics, the breakthroughs and the huge efforts of our Trustees and supporters who have guided and steered this programme through all the challenges.

Our sincerest thanks, as always, go to our Chairmen, Trustees and administrators who have continued to give freely of their time to this undertaking; and to the supporters whose generosity has kept it all going. They should all take much of the credit for the success of this project, but there is still more to do.

Rose with her second calf – a female – born in February 2009

Now for the detail...

Mkomazi National Park Infrastructural development

Drilling for water

Wilfred Ayo fixing plant machinery

Taking the piston out of the aircraft

Chairman, Director General and Trustees of the Board of TANAPA visit with Mr Mnyagatwa, Mkomazi Chief Park Warden

Toyota Landcruiser, donated by IFAW

Aircraft maintenance

The Chief Park Warden, Mr Mnyagatwa, has taken up the reins of managing MNP and we meet with him regularly to discuss work issues and plans. Our local Trustees have called for a meeting with the Director of Wildlife and the TANAPA authorities to formalise the relationship between our local Trust – Wildlife Preservation Trust Fund (WPTF) - and the new administration. There are complexities involved in this (having just said it was simple...), but these are mainly based on writing a new, straight-forward template for a small wildlife trust such as WPTF to work in partnership with TANAPA after 20 years with the Wildlife Division (WD). TANAPA is also preparing a new general management plan for the park.

In the meantime we have been pleased to welcome many senior personnel from TANAPA including the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Trustees, the Director General, the Director of Conservation, the Director of Ecological Monitoring, the Director of Finance and the PR department.

We were very pleased to see Erasmus Tarimo taking over as Tanzania's Director of Wildlife. Since his Directorship commenced, he has addressed many of our issues with sincerity and candour. Importantly, he has given his formal endorsement for work to move forwards, having been involved with The Mkomazi Project since inception and having understood the challenges that have faced us over the years.

During the period of transition between Game Reserve and National Park administration, our plant and machinery continued to work on road networks, firebreaks, airstrip maintenance and dam de-silting. Suzuki Rhino Club (The Netherlands), IFAW and TUSK Trust provided the funding to carry out this essential field work. Sir Anthony Bamford and JCB in the UK donated an entire new gear box which was fitted in the workshop by Tony and Fred, as well as new tyres and general spares. The aircraft continued to fly on operational patrol and back up to rangers in the field – IFAW again supporting the aircraft fuel and maintenance costs. The Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, Tom and Nancy Gallagher, George Mavroudis and Charles Klein also supported these crucial costs during the transition period.

IFAW generously donated a vehicle which has done more to help the considerable journeys between Mkomazi, Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Kora than we could ever express adequately in writing, let alone the boost to the morale of the workshop personnel.

With thanks to the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), WPTF employed a mobile team who patrol on foot on the periphery of the Rhino Sanctuary and the park in general to try to reduce poaching and snaring. Within the first month, the team recovered up to 300 snares and continued apace with great results over the following months. Significantly, WSPA also donated a vehicle for back-up to the mobile team as well as field training, which included provision of a camera and a GPS. The Conservation Director of WSPA spent a week in the field with a consultant from MWEKA College for African Wildlife Management to train the team in field and data reporting and use of the GPS.

During the 2007 Christmas period, there were many serious cattle incursions (sometimes up to 10,000 head of stock) and our teams were asked to join stock-patrols with TANAPA and WD rangers, the District and village field-force, split into three mobile units with WPTF also providing fuel and a vehicle. These joint patrols also took place during the first half of 2008 and the TANAPA officers commended the WPTF personnel on their discipline and hard work, often under tough conditions. The two permanent security outposts at Maore and Kifakua, constructed and staffed by WPTF, continue to provide security for the area.

Friends of Serengeti Switzerland donated a generator, shipped from China, and one of the most crucial pieces of equipment in the workshop. GAWPT and Suzuki Rhino Club have both sent in containers of much needed spares. Royal African, through Peter and Julianna Silvester, gave a donation to help upgrade the base-camp, so we were delighted to put this to full use. The camp and our guest tents look really wonderful.

MWEKA College for African Wildlife Management sent in 98 students to learn about the endangered species programmes and the environmental education programme.

We were also honoured to receive a visit from the wildlife authorities of Ethiopia and Sudan who were in Tanzania looking at rehabilitation and endangered species programmes from which to identify suitable policies for their own countries. They spent time in camp, the Rhino Sanctuary and at the wild dog breeding compounds. We held extensive discussion on how The Mkomazi Project was carried out in general and the endangered species programme in particular. It was a fascinating visit, which also gave us insight into their own policies and visions for the future.

The short rains this year were too short and yet amazingly the park still looks lush. We have seen herds of over 300 elephant, over 100 buffalo and strengthening populations of lesser kudu, giraffe, oryx and eland.

Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary (MRS)

The resident rhino population is doing well. Another female (who arrived with the second translocation) has had a male calf (Billy) so currently three out of four of our adult females are breeding. Yet tragically, we lost a male calf to a sudden-death black mamba snake bite, with the autopsy carried out by the Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute.

The main and most crucial priority is to increase the founder population to at least 12 or 15 rhino in order for it to be viable and for it to expand. We have had to be extremely patient on this over the past few years. The good news is that Dr Dana Holeckova, the Director of the Dvur Kralove Zoo in the Czech Republic, visited Mkomazi with Dr Hamish Currie of Back to Africa and agreed in principle to donate 3 black rhino (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) to the MRS. The Director of Wildlife gave his formal endorsement and we are currently preparing for this transfer with all the protocols and processes it involves. Dr Peter Morkel will undertake the translocation.

The Sanctuary needs to be extended to prepare for these animals and we are very grateful to US Fish & Wildlife and the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation for providing the necessary funds for this extension. The reasoning behind this is:

a) The resident rhino have well established home-ranges and territories.
b) Any incoming rhino will put pressure on these ranges and territories.
c) There is a need to extend the natural water sources and the new proposed area will enclose four natural water pans.
d) The females and calves have settled in an area of good vegetation and the extension will also enclose more of this vegetation.
e) The sub-adult male (Billy) will soon move away from his mother and he will need to establish his own territory without upsetting or disturbing the resident bulls.

Ted van Dam, Suzuki Rhino Club, with Semu Pallangyo, Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary Manager

EAZA / Save the Rhino Massey Ferguson tractor being resupplied in the field

The solid and secure systems that allow us to run the MRS at such a professional level are due to the support and loyalty of the Suzuki Rhino Club and Ted van Dam, TUSK Trust, IFAW, Swordspoint Foundation, Save the Rhino, Chester Zoo, Friends of Serengeti Switzerland, as well as many other committed individuals, to name but a few – Ed and Liberty Zwick, Tim Peet, Tim Oliver, Sharon Allen and Diane Ferguson.

The Suzuki Rhino Club have put on more corporate fundraising events, one of which was attended by the Director General of TANAPA, Gerald Bigarube. We were also really pleased to welcome 45 of the Suzuki Sales and After-Sales teams to Mkomazi who came to see the project in the field. Richard Ruggiero of US Fish & Wildlife visited and we were very pleased to be able to show him and his family the results of the support his organisation has given – this includes a borehole for direct water supply for the rhinos, a vehicle, binoculars, night vision equipment and trained personnel.

The MRS personnel continue to uphold their reputation as one of the most hard-working, disciplined and loyal workforces in African wildlife conservation. Daily operations are arduous and it is through the integrity of the sector leaders that everything is maintained. Again, we are grateful to IFAW for supporting these key personnel and sector-heads. 18 rhino rangers from Serengeti National Park visited the sanctuary to receive operational training and their feedback was very positive.

Suzuki Rhino Club raise the flag

Environmental Education bus 'Rafiki wa Faru' with pupils on board looking at rhinos – David Pluth

A 'crash' of rhino drinking

Rhino with oxpeckers – David Pluth

Suzuki Rhino Club generously donated 3 new vehicles (2 specifically converted off-road Grand Vitaras and a Jimny) which will greatly relieve the burden on maintaining the old vehicles. The workshop personnel can keep a vehicle going for about 15 years but after that, even they have to admit defeat, especially with the workload and the condition of the roads and the bush.

The EAZA / Save the Rhino-funded Massey Ferguson tractor is hard at work maintaining the fence-line, the roads and firebreaks so work that would normally have taken two weeks now takes three days.

And finally... more words of thanks; to Guy Farley and Patrick Folkes who ran the Lewa Marathon for TUSK Trust and dedicated the funds raised in sponsorship to GAWPT for the rhino programme.

African Wild Dog Breeding, Veterinary and Re-introduction Programme

The past year has focused mainly on reintroducing some of the wild dogs we have bred back into the Mkomazi / Tsavo ecosystem. We have had success, semi-success and a disaster. The dogs that do well, do really well. For example, there is one pack of nine males that were released last year, six of whom were seen as recently as July 08 at Tsavo West National Park in Kenya. A second pack of five males and three females were re-introduced together and seven of them have been seen at Maore in Mkomazi. Recently a pack of eight wild dogs was seen at Kamakota and we were also sent photographs of wild dogs in Tsavo West – not from the breeding packs at Kisima but we were all pleased to see the return of wild dogs to the Tsavo / Mkomazi ecosystem.

The Tsavo authorities are equally pleased with the presence of wild dogs and are happy with our veterinary programme and how we manage the breeding facility pre-release. We try to keep track of them for about two and a half months and Tsavo give us information on dogs that are in their range.

We have had losses to a leopard shortly after release (we had under-estimated the return of leopard to Mkomazi) and in December 07 during an unprecedented incursion of nearly 10,000 head of cattle into Mkomazi during the hand-over between the WD and TANAPA, one pack went after the goats owned by pastoralists and were killed. This is obviously horrendous for us but we have to learn from

Reintroduced wild dogs

Wild dog reintroduction compound

Feeding frenzy

Reintroduction area on the Mkomazi / Tsavo border

both our successes and failures, and tackle these difficulties. There is no magic formula, just trial and error and the attitude and cunning of the individual dog and, sometimes, good luck.

On the way to freedom

We are now back to the basics of breeding them up and reintroducing them back to the wild and running alongside this is the vaccination programme. WSPA kindly imported the distemper and rabies vaccine donated by Merial and Longleat helped with veterinary supplies.

As always, our sincerest thanks go to George and Natasha Duffield who have supported this wild dog programme for many years. Also to the Swordspoint Foundation which has been extremely generous to the whole project and, significantly, the wild dog programme. To Teresa and Stuart Graham who have given generous support to the wild dogs through TUSK. Finally to Martin Clunes who came with a crew to film the dogs and very kindly donated the radio collars used on released packs.

Tony joined with Olly & Suzi (wildlife artists) to give a talk at the Royal Geographical Society in November 07 in London on the plight of wild dogs as a species on the brink of extinction. It was an instructive talk, outlining the principles and practices of this programme here in Mkomazi, the methods through which the breeding, veterinary and reintroduction work is carried out, future visions and Olly & Suzi's work with these extraordinary animals.

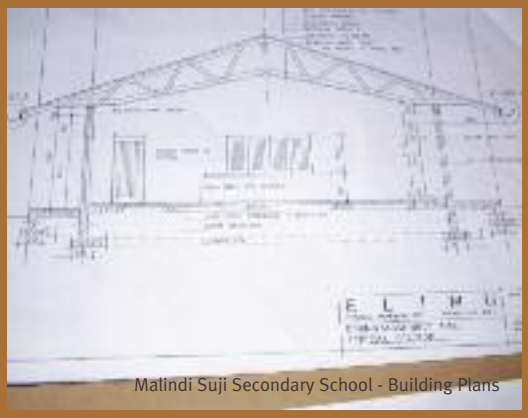
As we move through 2009, we have four breeding groups at Kisima and we have been really pleased to show the Chairman, Trustees and Directors of TANAPA the workings of this endangered species programme.

Wild dog airstrip feed.

Wild dogs watching

Tony watching reintroduced wild dogs

Lunguza Secondary School, Kivingo Village existing classrooms.



Malindi Suji Secondary School - Building Plans

Vudee Secondary School - 3 classrooms plastered & 4th completed, plastered and roofed

Mkomazi Outreach Programme

2007-2009 has been an exceptional period for outreach work. Through the generosity of a UK foundation we were able to support the construction of classrooms in nine schools in the four districts surrounding MNP. This is a remarkable achievement and the District Commissioner of Same described WPTF as the one of the 'front-lines' of assistance to education in his district.

Elisaria Nnko, our operations manager, identifies schools needing priority assistance with each of the four District Commissioners (Same, Mwanga, Korogwe and Lushoto). Building materials are handed over during official ceremonies. WPTF then monitors the building work over the next few months tries to ensure that the job is completed as per the original specification.

We have given assistance to Secondary Schools in Vudee, Malindi Suji, Shighatini, Lunguza, Mapanda, Kisiwani and Gonja and Kivingo Primary School, We also gave a donation of building materials to Pangaro Primary School.

It was finally possible to deploy funds raised by Simone Motzko and GAWeV in Germany, to continue construction of the library at Hedaru Secondary School after the school had overcome its difficulties.

We are in the process of determining dates for the official handover of building materials to a further four secondary schools.

Elisaria donating roofing sheets and building materials to Lunguza Secondary School, Kivingo Village.

Mapanda Secondary School - GAWPT building materials used for plastering the inside and the floor

Mapanda Secondary School - GAWPT flooring of new classroom, awaiting cement

Shighatini Secondary School - ongoing construction to complete one classroom and finish a second

Mapanda Secondary School dormitory foundations

Malindi Suji Secondary School refurbishment.

Environmental Education Programme 'Rafiki wa faru'

We have now launched the Environmental Education programme, supported by TUSK, Chester Zoo, Save the Rhino and recently WSPA. This is an extraordinary partnership of four conservation organisations and we are extremely proud of the programme we have been able to put together with their funds and advice.

Environmental Education bus

This programme was developed for the benefit of the local communities, especially local school pupils, as through this initiative they will be actively involved in local environmental issues and wildlife, significantly the conservation of the black rhino and wild dog. Rafiki wa Faru means Friends of Rhino and hopefully some of these children will take up the baton as the next generation of Tanzanians to conserve endangered species.

Elisaria teaching pupils in the Environmental Education centre

The bus itself is a fantastic sight. Painted in tinga-tinga style, it is a large and dramatic education tool in itself. All the Tanzanians who visit our project think it is really wonderful - we wish we had recorded all of their comments. The actual classroom is built high on a hill in the Rhino Sanctuary with breath-taking views. TUSK, SRI and Chester Zoo all funded construction of this classroom and it is now furnished with benches, desks, education materials, solar power, a generator and a big TV. It also has an outside eating area for the pupils and pit latrines. SRI have donated educational materials and prizes for the school pupils and Chester Zoo are producing more teaching resources and posters.

Pupils outside the Environmental Education Centre

Elisaria Nnko has taken on the duty of Education Officer. He has travelled with the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya and the Laikipia Wildlife Forum to broaden his knowledge and also received training from Maggie Esson, the Education Programmes Manager of Chester Zoo.

For the first year, the daily session follows the outline advised by Maggie. The pupils are all from Form 1 of the secondary schools (aged approx 15 years old). 27 pupils and 2 teachers are collected by the bus from Same or Kisiwani and brought into Mkomazi. They visit the wild dog programme, the workshops and the water-catchment projects at Kisima. They then head to the MRS and the Environmental Education Centre where they have a 20 minute lesson about conservation, a 10 minute DVD about rhinos and Mkomazi, followed by lunch, a re-cap and an activity. They meet the Mkomazi Rhino rangers, visit the rhino observation bunker, hopefully see a rhino and are taken back to Same or Kisiwani at the end of the day. After each session, we give out review sheets for the teachers to complete and Elisaria fills in his own session form for review.

Group of school pupils after a day in the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary

The programme was launched in June 08 and at the time of writing (February 09) we have brought in over 700 school pupils and 70 teachers. Maggie Esson is considering presenting this programme at an upcoming rhino forum.

Secondary School pupils from Kilimanjaro at wild dog compound

Environmental education pupils categorising

General, trustees and travel

Ethiopian and Sudanese wildlife authorities visit Mkomazi

The Chairman and Trustees of WPTF continued to give support, valuable advice and direction on all aspects of the project.

We were delighted to welcome Trustees from the various GAWPTs and the trustees and directors of many of the groups that support us.

Our thanks as always to the Patron of GAWPT, HRH Princess Michael of Kent, who continues to give her support and friendship.

Thanks also to the Friends of Mkomazi (a group of long-standing friends and individuals who support GAWPT in the UK and the USA), Mazao/Neumanns, Indigo Telecommunications, Moritz Borman, Tom Garvin and Mark and Lee Shanker.

Visit by the Trustees of GAWPT, the Mortimers, Toulsons and Kents

Stop Press...

In Feb 2009, just as the newsletter was going to print, Rose, one of the females that came with the first translocation of rhino in 1997 came to the water hole with her second calf, a female!

Christian the Lion: An extraordinary event took shape in 08 on YouTube. It showed a clip from a 1970's film about Christian - a lion that one of GAWPT's Trustees, John Rendall, bought from Harrods with his friend Ace Bourke. They looked after Christian for a year in London and then took him out to George Adamson and Tony to be reintroduced back into the wild in Kora. YouTube showed footage of Christian being reunited with John and Ace after he had been reintroduced back into the wild. It received over 45,000,000 hits!!

George Adamson and Christian

Tony Fitzjohn and Christian

Kudu running – David Pluth

Lucy Mchana, Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary Security Guard

And finally.....to four people who captured the imagination of all of us who work here in Mkomazi; The Cycle of Life: Barty, Chris, Andy and Jess, who cycled with true courage and determination all the way from Namibia to Kenya for TUSK Trust – a distance of over 7,000 kms, in the most basic conditions with the most basic kit. This massive endeavour raised a huge amount of money for charity. After a few days in Mkomazi, they departed at sunset over the horizon on the vast tarmac roads of Tanzania and we all agreed that we don't get to meet adventurers like that very much any more.

Our work at Mkomazi is far from over. National Park status has not diminished our enthusiasm for still greater progress in tandem with TANAPA so we look forward to your continued and much appreciated support.

As for the UK blog, DOTTY RHINO, it continues to prove very popular with youngsters and generates a lot of interest so keep blogging .... Dotty and her friends would like to hear from you - they have all the latest news and some great merchandise. www.dottyrhino.com.

Aerial view of Kisima base-camp

JCB at work

Contact details

GERMANY
George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust - Germany.
GAWeV
Kohlgruberstrasse 6
81377 Munich
Germany
T +49 89 719 096 30
F +49 89 710 464 52
info@Mkomazi.de
www.Mkomazi.de

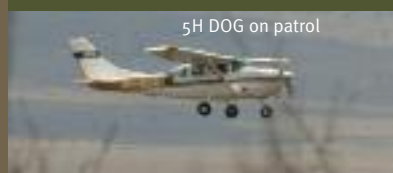
KENYA
Anthony Gross
George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust
P O Box 57792
Nairobi
Kenya
afgross@africaonline.co.ke

NETHERLANDS
Hugo J Baas
Sticthting George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust
Uitweg 12, 3652 LP Woerdens Verlaat
The Netherlands
Attention H.Baas/V.Six
T +31 20 6491780
F +31 65 3470974

TANZANIA
Wildlife Preservation Trust Fund
P O Box 1192 Dar es Salaam
Tanzania
Mkomazi@wildlifenow.com

UK
Georgina Mortimer
George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust
16A Park View Road
London N3 2JB
T +44 (0)20 8343 4246
info@georgeadamson.org
www.georgeadamson.org

USA
Jeff Stein
The Tony Fitzjohn/George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust
25022 Malibu Road, Suite 1
Malibu, CA90265
T +1 310 777 3555
mkomazi@earthlink.net
www.wildlifenow.com



5H DOG on patrol