



GEORGE ADAMSON
WILDLIFE PRESERVATION TRUST

REPORT AND NEWSLETTER – 2019-2021



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The transformation of Mkomazi from a degraded game reserve to a national park with flourishing wildlife populations under the guardianship of the Tanzania National Parks authority (TANAPA), the success of our long-term projects for the black rhino and African wild dog as well as our community outreach programmes has been in very many ways due to the solid and longstanding commitment of all of our supporters and friends. We left behind us in Mkomazi a real legacy, together with our integrity as a working field organisation, and an extraordinary story of success and achievement. We are sincerely grateful to you all for the very significant part you played in that story.

We have tried to bear the principles, practices and ethics that were learnt from the generation that came before us and we are proud of how it has all worked out. If anyone could say that we stand on the shoulders of giants, those who had the vision, energy and determination to create these protected areas for the future, then we do.

At the beginning of the decade, we faced the transition back to Kenya. Our slightly distant and part-time involvement for the past 25 years in Kora National Park, where Tony worked with George Adamson for 18 years, had coincided with the recent political will in Kenya to rehabilitate this area and bring the wildlife back. The work of the Trusts entered a new and challenging phase which now draws on the achievements and experience of the past thirty years in Tanzania.

This report is for all our friends and supporters. It records the events of 2019-2021. It also provides a perspective on an extraordinary achievement and a vision for the future.



The upgrading of Mkomazi from a neglected and degraded game reserve to a national park in 2008 was the culmination of nearly 20 years of hard, physical field work undertaken firstly in partnership with the Wildlife Division and then with TANAPA.

By 2019, TANAPA's increasing stature and capacity both nationally and locally in Mkomazi, they were ready and capable to assume full responsibility over the whole area including the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary. Over that time, we had also come to the realisation that the recovery of the park, the establishment of infrastructure and the increase in wildlife meant that another part of the job we had come here to do – to help restore Mkomazi to its former beauty and grandeur – had, in the main, been done. By 2019, Mkomazi National Park was in very good condition and combined with new government regulations, poaching and domestic stock incursion had virtually ceased under TANAPA's management. In 2020 this led us inevitably to a year of preparation for handover and transition.



We obviously wished to ensure that the eventual handover was as orderly and official as possible. The Trust in Tanzania, supported by the UK and USA trusts, worked tirelessly on extensive negotiations and committee meetings with TANAPA. It was a complex process that had to be executed very carefully. We eventually transferred large amounts of equipment to TANAPA, as well as the full infrastructure of the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary with the newly upgraded fence, the African wild dog programme, the base-camp, the extensive workshops and the house, including all the functioning systems (solar, water, mechanical and electrical), thereby leaving the project fully furnished with those proven and efficient systems in place. Continuity was crucial for the future. Most importantly, all of our personnel were taken on by TANAPA and this was one of the main focuses of long discussions. TANAPA recognised that these highly trained and self-motivated personnel were critical to the continuity and ongoing success of the projects.



The handover ceremony took place at the TANAPA HQ in Arusha and the agreement was signed by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of TANAPA, General (Rtd) George Waitara, former Chief of the Defence Forces of Tanzania, and Bernard S Mchomvu, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Wildlife Preservation Trust Fund, our long term trustee, friend and advisor. This was a genuine and heartfelt handover and we transitioned out on good terms. There then followed a period of transition in Mkomazi whilst TANAPA assumed responsibilities for the programmes.



Saving any large piece of the natural environment requires an enormous amount of practical field work – the demarcation of boundaries, the creation and opening up of roads for access and detection of intrusion, the construction of tracks, water sources, airstrips and firebreaks, aircraft patrols, deployment of plant machinery and vehicles, the support of a fully-functioning workshop, long supply-runs, the installation of radio communications, solar power and water systems are to mention just a few. These ran alongside all the other associated protection methods necessary for the area to be left in peace and not get increasingly degraded, as is happening to areas all around it. We are grateful that for all of those years in Mkomazi, working together first with the Wildlife Division and then with TANAPA, we had the freedom to emphasise the importance of the basics of wildlife conservation and how to make an ecosystem work without too many frills and unnecessary investments.

Wildlife populations had continued to improve. It was increasingly possible to see elephant, oryx, lesser kudu, buffalo, eland, kongoni, zebra, impala, giraffe and many other smaller mammals, as well as lion, leopard and cheetah and other smaller carnivores. Wild dog packs were regularly seen



and even vultures returned to Dindira Dam. With an end to the constant burning and domestic stock incursion, the soils and vegetation cover improved and the huge regrowth in both the Acacia woodlands, Commiphora bushlands and the long grass cover gave a chance for seedlings to mature as well as providing cover for the smaller mammals, reptiles and birds, let alone the insect biodiversity that increased over this 30 year period.

Over those last two years in the field, the heavy plant & machinery upgraded the major access roads which needed murrum-ing, grading and cambering. Huge floods washed away roads, drainage ditches and a man-made drift bridge, all of which needed repair. Maintenance of the firebreaks around the base camp and the Rhino Sanctuary was a priority after the long rains.



The main Kisima airstrip was graded and the Zange airstrip had to be repaired. The bulldozer worked on the construction of a new dam in the middle of the Park (a joint project with TANAPA). The TANAPA engineers had originally surveyed our choice of site, and then moved it to another area. Tony was always unhappy with their new chosen site as he felt that they would not be able to dig as deep as they needed. This proved to be the case which was very disappointing after the huge amount of work and machine/operator time that had gone into this. But everything has a fix and one can only hope that with a few judiciously placed channels in the area, coming down from the sides of the nearby hills that will feed the dam, they will be able to increase the water storage and make it a useful project and good water source for all wildlife, significantly the elephant herds of the Mkomazi/Tsavo ecosystem.

Joint patrols with TANAPA took place on a regular basis on foot, in vehicles and by aircraft and the tracker dog unit formed a significant part of these patrols with a TANAPA ranger permanently posted to this unit. Joint patrols between TANAPA and Kenya Wildlife Services took place along the border.

Aerial support was absolutely crucial to the ongoing development of the Park and this was undertaken on a continual basis since 1990. Recently the return of elephant to the northern and central areas of the Park led to more aircraft patrols. Follow up of illegal activity or torches seen at night was done with the aircraft, a joint patrol team and the tracker dogs. The air support greatly added to the effectiveness of the ground patrols and was bolstered by aerial censuses undertaken by a TANAPA aircraft. The TANAPA pilot reported a large number of elephant, a big increase in wildlife and very little incursion of domestic stock.



Supporting the daily operations of the project was the fully functioning and extensive workshop with a huge working brief ranging from aircraft maintenance through to heavy plant machinery maintenance and across the spectrum to communication systems, water, fencing, electrical, solar power and the sensor network systems.

Before the Covid19 pandemic hit, another three applications were in play for tourist camps in the National Park, one of which was already under construction in the north by the time we handed over, complementing the newly sited Babu's Camp. We constructed a water hole for Babu's Camp and a ditch behind the camp between two gullies so that when rainwater came down the hillside it drained off into the gullies rather than into the camp. TANAPA were also





well underway with the construction of their rhino sanctuary for tourism in the north of the park.

Our close working partnership with TANAPA continued throughout this time with constant meetings and communications and it was good to have such an understanding colleague in the Chief Park Warden, Abel Peter Mtui. It was always good to welcome the former Conservation Commissioner Dr Allan Kijazi along with his senior directors and management.

Discussions took place on a project to construct a historical centre at the Park HQ with a history of the Trusts' contribution to the conservation efforts at Mkomazi.

Two months after the handover, we celebrated the 2020 New Year with Chief Park Warden Mtui, his staff and many representatives of local government, business and the communities.



It was an eye-opener to see the big reach and empowerment of TANAPA in the local area and heartening to hear the words 'Mkomazi National Park' said repeatedly over the microphone throughout the festivities. It was a bittersweet moment for us as we were on our way to an uncertain future after so many years in what we regarded as 'home'.



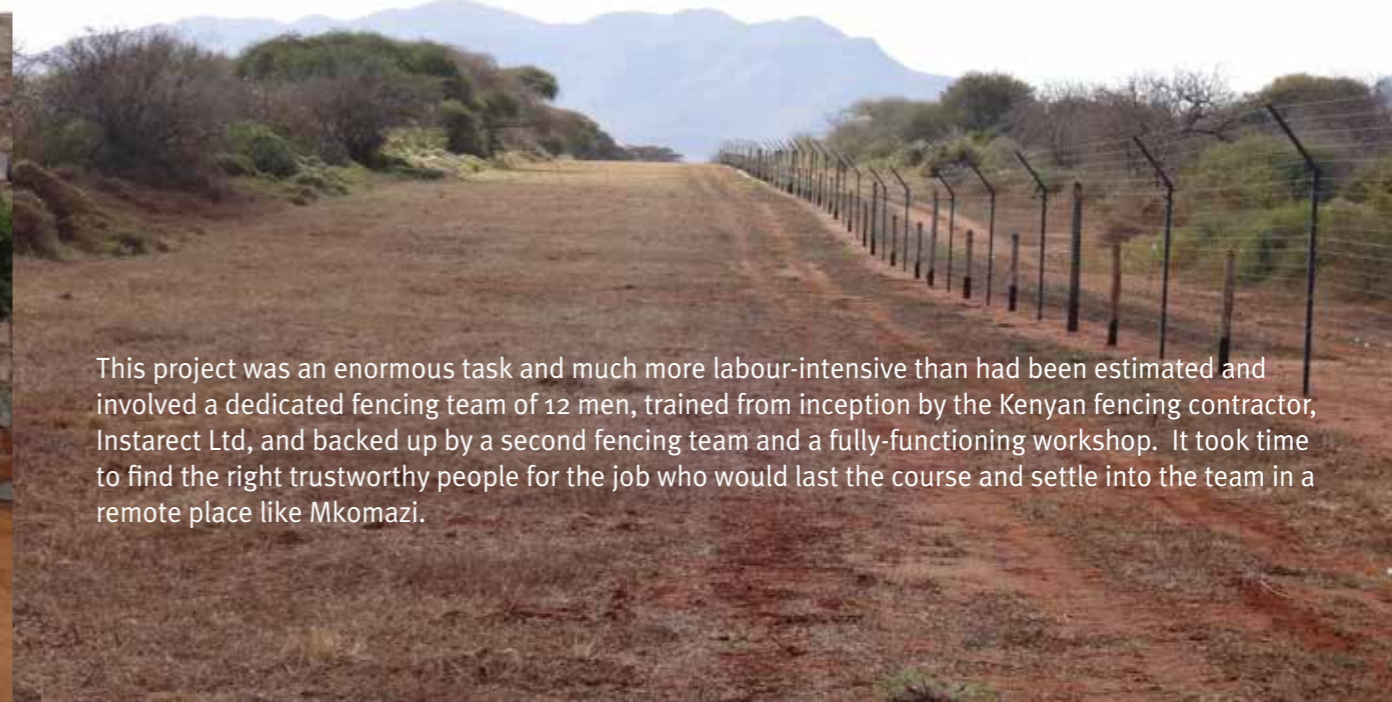
We are indeed very grateful to have been given the chance to work with the Wildlife Division and TANAPA to turn what was a forgotten wasteland that was about to be degazetted into the stunning 3,270 square kilometre national park that it has become today with Tanzania's first rhino sanctuary. These partnerships and the continued success of the project demonstrate above all that with total dedication and together, it is possible to reverse what at times appears to be the catastrophic and inevitable process of the degradation of the natural world.

By early 2020, the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary was home to 34 black rhinos (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*), the third largest of Tanzania's five rhino populations. The Sanctuary is an integral part of Tanzania's efforts to breed and recover numbers of black rhinos and a well-established sanctuary such as this is important in securing the future of not just Tanzania's black rhino, but also for its contribution to the survival of the Eastern black rhino. From 1997 to 2020 there were zero (0) poaching incidents in the Sanctuary and we cannot emphasise enough how much we owe to the teams who worked there throughout these years in difficult and arduous conditions.



In 1989 when the Trusts started work in Tanzania, there were an estimated 24 individual rhinos in the whole country compared to tens of thousands that had roamed here in the late 1970's. Now rhino conservation is taken seriously and we are proud to have been part of that growth process. TANAPA plan to both protect and re-establish populations where they once existed, in some areas using the Mkomazi sanctuary as a template. A national Conservation and Management Plan for Black Rhino in Tanzania was produced in 2019 and Elisaria Nnko attended the workshop for the initial drafting of this plan.

Part of the focus of those last two years was the full upgrading of the entire peripheral fence-line. The Sanctuary has a number of security layers in place; aerial surveillance, security guards, the electrified and alarmed fence, the tracking teams and fence maintenance personnel, the communication systems, a TANAPA ranger outpost close to the Sanctuary and the TANAPA intelligence network. A crucial element of this security was the upgrading of the peripheral fence-line.



This project was an enormous task and much more labour-intensive than had been estimated and involved a dedicated fencing team of 12 men, trained from inception by the Kenyan fencing contractor, Instarect Ltd, and backed up by a second fencing team and a fully-functioning workshop. It took time to find the right trustworthy people for the job who would last the course and settle into the team in a remote place like Mkomazi.

The new fence represented a completely new superior configuration with upgraded solar power, energizers, alarms and increased voltage. The bottom half of the fence was configured with a handmade mesh construction which helped stop the ingress of predators and made it more secure against people. Each security outpost now contained a system to send wireless transmissions back to monitors in the



operations room. The fencing was not just a question of straight lines; there were hillsides to cover, gullies to cross and long ditches to be put in to take the water draining from the hillsides away from the fence-line, wash-aways to be repaired and dams and road crossings to be improved. We even had to bulldoze an entire new section of fence-line which entailed bringing an existing security outpost right down the hill to be re-positioned on the new line. We were very grateful to Peter Hays for the site visits, problem solving, repairs, training, stock-takes and service.

We were able to hand over to TANAPA a 20-strand fence (including a cantilever) that is much stronger and safer and also looks much more formidable. The technical systems we put in place were humming away and were well up on modern technology without taking it too far into the realm of the unsustainable. A considerable stock of fencing materials was provided on site for TANAPA to use, specifically for the proposed extension. With minimal maintenance, this fence should last for at least 20 years.

That last year in Mkomazi showed no slowing down of our work in the Sanctuary, improving infrastructure and security. This included personnel on full operational duties, machinery constantly deployed, aircraft patrols, the workshop and maintenance schedules at full-tilt, water being delivered continuously to both personnel and rhinos, each water pan throughout the Sanctuary manned on a 24/7 basis, roads, tracks and airstrips



maintained - in fact all the operating systems that have kept everything in order and stood us in such good stead.

The old D4D bulldozer laboriously progressed onwards with the widening of the observation line around the Sanctuary to improve visibility and thereby upgrade security. The JCB cleared a road up to the new tracker outpost and completed digging out a water catchment which was then fenced to help ensure that there would be enough water to last through the dry season. Machinery was then sent out for many weeks to help excavate and construct this outpost. Tracks, patrol roads and firebreaks were maintained by the tractor and trailer. Tracks were also cut by hand during the long rains with the resultant abundant vegetation as it was essential to ensure the safety of the rhino trackers who patrol on foot for the majority of the day and need good visibility. The Grader was sent out to repair flood damage on the internal roads and the main access roads and it also worked on re-grading the main airstrip.

Roads were also cleared up the hills for the Smart Parks sensor network system. This ever-evolving system is of huge benefit to wildlife managers especially now with the new GPS-based systems. It gives an immediate 'at-a-glance' update on where the animals, people and vehicles are and this really helps security and this gives peace of mind. A self-contained and reliable system like this is invaluable – and this proved to be even more



the case during a time such as the pandemic - where the wildlife authorities saw their tourist revenues decrease. We handed this system over to TANAPA to ensure that they had the real-time readings through this technology and they were in direct contact with the team on the future development of small GPS rhino horn implants. With this system operational,

they will have a simplified job, as well as having some of the best rhino trackers on the continent.

The quads and motorbikes moved people and supplies around, gave very good situational updates and were economical too. Having two outriders there and the head rhino tracker with a bike plus vehicles that supplied them from the base-camp also meant that there was constant movement at all hours. Fence alarms were rapidly responded to on the bikes as well and they gave fast and immediate access to all the different areas of that big project. Overall, this was a good method for response and so much better than more guns and people sitting on outposts waiting for the next shift. To the day we left no one had tried to breach the security line.

The fantastic Scania truck and water tanker with a 25,000 litre capacity more than halved the number of trips needed to the Park HQ to collect water for the rhinos and personnel. It did enormously good service and with the specialized mechanics in Arusha that were brought in, ongoing and detailed maintenance was kept up to a high level. It only needs to be run once a day (invaluable, given that there is a 5-hour fill time at the Park HQ) and being

twice the size of old one, it uses quite a bit more fuel. One of the other positive impacts of this was that it freed up the drivers who at that level are also machine operators and enabled them to get on and undertake more field work with the other machines. Rock-face and roof water catchment from the base-camp infrastructure added to the storage capacity. From the three water storage tanks at the base-camp, the JCB Fastrac and bowser filled up to distribute water around the Sanctuary.



The old Scania had an engine rebuild and could be used as a back-up if water levels got low or in the event of an emergency, but was increasingly being used with the tanker body removed for lighter duties. It doubled as a crane lorry and this aspect of it was very useful.



The workshop continued to function with rigorous maintenance schedules and this involved an enormous amount of planning and logistics. These big maintenance cycles and general repairs were relentless and skilled mechanics were brought in from Arusha when necessary. Fuel was brought in bulk and stored on site in underground and overground tanks, spares were sourced and purchased with long supply lines sometimes reaching to the UK and USA. The carpenter and welder continued to make the metal fence cantilevers and housings to hold the fencing electrical equipment.



Aircraft surveillance and patrols of the Sanctuary took place whenever possible forming one of the main layers of security and the Cessna 206 was also ideal for moving welding equipment, generators, spares and mechanics



out to the field when there were breakdowns or servicing was needed. The aircraft patrols also were a morale boost to teams on the ground and those in the more remote outposts. The airstrips around the Sanctuary were re-cut and re-cleared with small thorn trees and stumps taken out and ant bear holes filled in.

We put in a new rhino tracker outpost on a hillside in the middle of the Sanctuary sited by our senior tracker, Emmanuel Metemi. In terms of presence, it is in a very good place in relation to both rhino distribution and other outposts with a wide vista and in an area where the females go to give birth. We put in an additional water pan in this area for these females. This new outpost was invaluable for increasing sightings of rhinos and also for increasing security with the wide aspect view across the main Sanctuary.

A huge cyclone came off the Indian Ocean and the rains it brought with it took the whole country by surprise. Rain like this hadn't been seen in 30 years of living in Mkomazi. Torrents of rain cascaded down for weeks on end. A massive flood came through the Sanctuary, forcing fence posts down and washing them away downstream. The tiny little gully where water once gently flowed in the wet season became a raging river. The entire water dam inside the Sanctuary was almost lost as it broke its banks and flooded, taking with it an access road and a bridge. The rhino trackers had to sleep in cars on the outside of the fence to make sure no rhinos went out and no poachers came in. A huge and sustained effort was suddenly needed to repair the damage. Both fencing gangs were pulled into the repairs, and casual

labour was hired in from the village to firstly shore up the dam, line it and repair the access roads. Gabions, which are essentially galvanised wire metal cages that hold heavy rocks to form a strategic barrier, were put in place and much higher poles installed. Plant machinery was deployed for these tasks and to rebuild the large gully. Along the fence line, wash-aways were repaired and drainage ditches created.



The next rainy season brought with it good steady rain on a daily basis, soaking the now parched soils week after week. The flood systems that we put in held up and the big drainage course that runs through the Sanctuary controlled the huge influx of water. These rains ultimately went on through to the next rainy season.

In the last year we were there, we decided to close down the tracker dog unit because one dog contracted Tryps (*Trypanosoma Brucei*) from tsetse flies, despite all the intensive protection measures we had put in place, although amazingly he recovered. Despite their dedication, the handlers could miss the odd fly which is all it takes, and regular training was not always possible. But mainly the unit also needed full-time TANAPA veterinary support which at that time was not available. It was a fantastic unit whilst operational and a valuable addition to the security of the Sanctuary. Both knowledge of traditional snaring areas and the random nature of the patrols had resulted in several apprehensions, the collection of hundreds of snares and the downturn in availability of bush meat in local markets. Upkeep of the tsetse targets, with support from TANAPA, was a constant as 570 targets had to be maintained every two months or after the rains. A TANAPA ranger was posted to this unit and a modified Suzuki was based at the unit which worked well with the back-up of the larger Toyota pick-up which came out to meet them en route to patrols. We understood that TANAPA were keen to re-establish and expand the tracker dog unit at the Sanctuary and we hoped that veterinary support could be made available on a full-time basis.



And of course – the Sanctuary personnel. The greatest resource we had was our Human Resource. Of all the many facets that went to make up this project, it was the people in which we took the greatest pride. We were incredibly fortunate to have had the most skilled, adaptable, tough and dedicated Tanzanian staff led by the inspirational and highly respected Elisaria Nnko, without whom nothing would have been achieved. His commitment, integrity and ability to put a team together and keep them together was the binding force for 30 years and without him we would have been lost.

Our staff had been trained up and empowered by us under their section managers to do the job to the best of their ability and they had more than risen to the challenge. We think we were one of the only rhino facilities in Africa that hadn't lost a rhino to poaching and it says a lot for these dedicated men and women who have now become full TANAPA employees.

Over the reporting period, the Sanctuary security force, ex-Army personnel originally recruited by our former Chairman, the late Brigadier General Hashim I Mbita, were retired by TANAPA. These loyal ex-Army men and





women certainly proved their worth with a record of zero rhinos poached and zero poaching attempts since the rhino project commenced. They were replaced by a full complement of many TANAPA rangers.

The rhino trackers worked hard throughout the year, tracking and gaining a visual sighting of the rhinos every day or two. They were supported by the teams moving around the Sanctuary on patrol or responding to fence alarms or incidents, checking the outposts and carrying out random checks. The trackers were carefully selected and it took time to determine their trustworthiness and ability to both work in a remote place and form part of a team working towards the security and welfare of the rhinos under their care, as well as understanding the different characters of each individual animal. We are immensely proud of these trackers, who were trained up in Mkomazi and now have extraordinary capacity in this incredible skill. It was imperative that this tracking team remained intact as a tight-knit, settled and committed unit.

The fencing team carrying out the upgrade worked very well under their head of section needing very little supervision. They were an incredibly tough and dedicated group, tirelessly working out problems that were hard to pin down. This fencing work was laborious, the most time-consuming part being putting in the broad mesh by hand, but which upgraded Sanctuary security substantially.

The second fencing team in charge of repair and replacement were constantly active in and around the Sanctuary and fence line. These men had the difficult task of navigating the miles of electric fencing. Rain, dust and animals regularly came into contact with the fence and termite infested wooden posts needed to be replaced regularly. There was a stock of fence posts and wire available for ongoing repairs and the team were backed up by a dedicated Suzuki quad and trailer and vehicle when needed. They inspected the entire fence twice a day on foot and this ensured that they did not miss out on any problems. They worked tirelessly on the final sections of the peripheral fence that were awaiting the full upgrade to ensure these sections were covered. In 2020, under the employment of TANAPA, members of this team were redeployed to the new rhino sanctuary in the north of the park to assist with the fencing work.

We worked closely with TANAPA's veterinary officers over these decades and many meetings were held with these vets, the wardens and senior directors over those last two years on the need for decisions to be made in the short-term and long term regarding the management of the rhino population. As the rhino population expanded, so must the Sanctuary itself. This would obviously have needed to take into account the resultant increase in security and other issues that would arise.

Given the importance of this rhino population in Tanzania, it was agreed it would be important to produce a specialist review of the Sanctuary's ecological carrying capacity in terms of browse availability and water provision, the social structure of the rhino population, as well as the past breeding performance and future

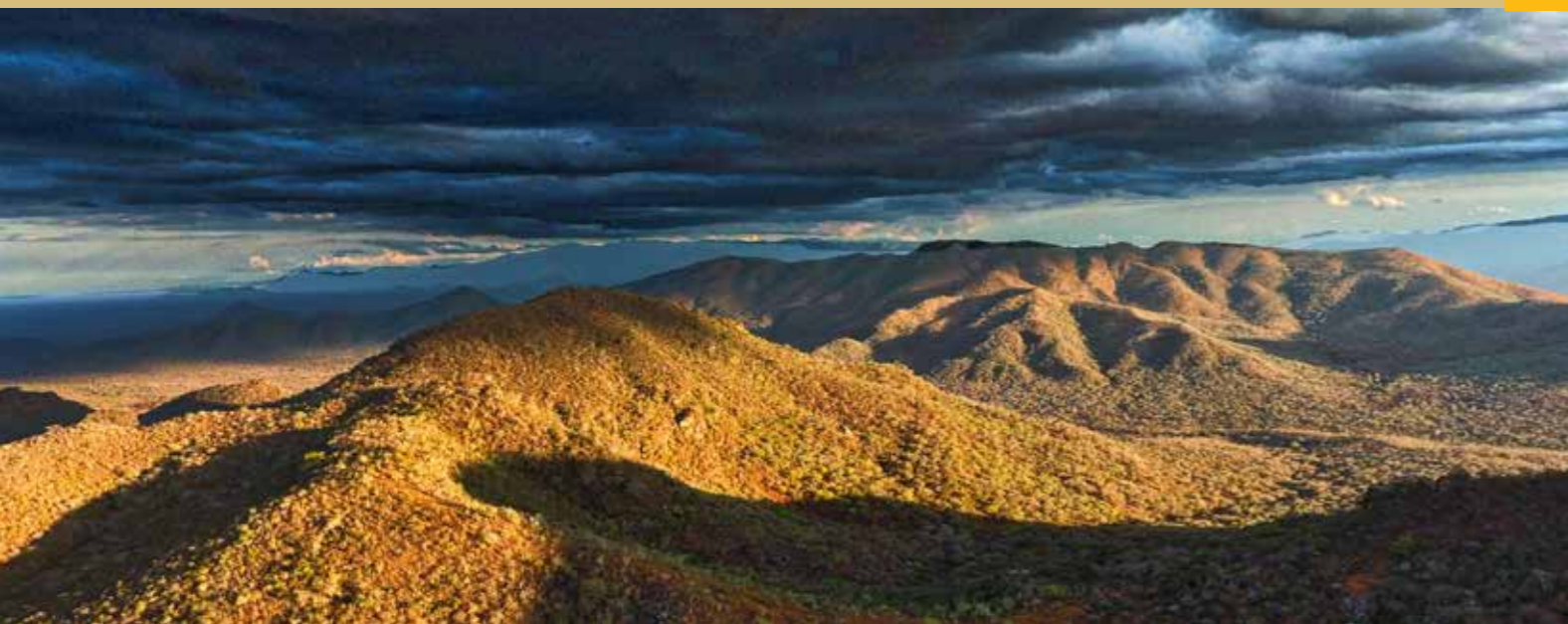


breeding plans. This reassessment would inform TANAPA about the long-term management of the Sanctuary. A visit from the National Rhino Committee took place where discussions were held on the future of rhino conservation in Mkomazi.

Expansion of the overall MRS area up to 100% is a priority in the medium term to increase the ecological carrying capacity of the area and significantly in the short term for the enclosure area holding one of the zoo-raised populations. We had developed detailed strategies with TANAPA to achieve this essential target and this had been a key focus of many discussions. These included the careful integration of the wild and zoo bred animals and the creation of expanded fenced areas for this purpose. On our departure we left much of the equipment, fencing materials and infrastructure to achieve this and we are confident that TANAPA will continue our work with the assistance of the African Specialist Rhino Group.

TANAPA were well underway with the construction of their rhino sanctuary when we handed over. The fence was being put in and ranger housing constructed. We were asked to meet and advise their fencing contractor. We sited an area where an airstrip could be constructed to serve the new sanctuary.

During the handover we donated the full infrastructure of the Sanctuary to TANAPA. This included the newly upgraded 40km fence-line, high quality technical systems, internal fences and holding compounds, a large amount of imported fencing materials for repairs and the proposed expansion, tracker and security outposts,



heavy plant and machinery, water tankers, vehicles, quad and motorbikes, generators, solar power systems, water storage and piping systems, fuel storage systems, communication systems, containers, the workshop, the base-camp, staff housing, kennels and tracker dog camp, spares parts for vehicle and plant maintenance, an aircraft hangar, solar equipment powering the fence, the fence monitoring and tracking system, the digital radio system and the Smart Parks system - ready for TANAPA to use when they began to fit more rhino horn transmitters (a project we had been unable to instigate for the past two years as the paranoia on dealing with rhinos reached an all-time high) - were handed over. With TANAPA's employment of the Trust personnel, the Sanctuary was a fully furnished and functioning project with all proven systems in place for it to carry on operating as it has done and to ensure the continuity of all facets of the core operations.

It had taken nearly 23 years of international conservation effort to increase overall black rhino numbers from the all-time low of around 2,400 in 1994 to 5,630 as at the end of 2018. While all of the three surviving subspecies of black rhino are on a slow path of recovery, they remain dependant on continued conservation efforts.

The Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary will continue to form part of Tanzania's strategy for recovery of its black rhino population, whether that may be as a Key 2 population of 50+ animals or as a source population to feed other rhino locations within northern Tanzania.

We have a thank you list at the end of the newsletter, but we do wish to say here how incredibly grateful we are to the Suzuki Rhino Club (SSRC), Tusk Trust, Save the Rhino International, US Fish & Wildlife Services, Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, Swordspoint Foundation, Marina L Schreyer Charitable Trust, Chester Zoo, The Rufford Foundation, the Friends of Mkomazi, Dvur Kralove Zoo, Friends of Serengeti Switzerland, Newman's Own Foundation, Climb for Conservation, Cotswold Wildlife Park & Gardens and other kind foundations, private individuals, friends and colleagues for working so closely with us to support the operating costs and equipment needed to manage and develop the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary. Their understanding and continued support enabled us to run a viable rhino sanctuary in fairly difficult conditions over many years.



The African wild dog, endemic only to Africa, is an endangered species. Loss of habitat, large predators, domestic stock, disease and man threaten their existence. In areas where game is scarce, wild dogs tend to get close to human settlements. As a consequence, they are poisoned or killed by other methods. When close to human settlements, they may come into close contact with domestic dogs. As the African wild dog is susceptible to diseases also found in domestic dogs (canine distemper, rabies and parvovirus), cross infection may occur, leading in some cases to high mortality. African wild dogs are on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and there are thought to be close to 6,500 surviving today in the wild across a handful of African countries compared to half a million across 39 countries at the beginning of the last century.

In the early records of Mkomazi from the 1950's, it was reported that there were "far too many wild dogs". By 1989, only one individual wild dog was recorded.

The endangered species programme in Mkomazi started in 1995 and was run as a practical management programme to try to address the decline. This involved breeding the wild dogs in seven breeding compounds in Kisima Camp, ten years of veterinary research, vaccination schedules and various reintroductions back into the wild in the Mkomazi/Tsavo ecosystem. The welfare of the dogs and their preparation for a free-living existence was the priority.

Some breeding alpha pairs remained at the base-camp in their compounds. Offspring, having helped their mother raise the subsequent litter, were separated and reintroduced back to the wild. The dogs were released either as sibling packs or full family packs.

Prior to the handover to TANAPA, we continued to breed and reintroduce the dogs back to the wild with the aim of re-establishing viable populations of healthy and genetically diverse stock back in the wild in areas where they would have the best chance of success. The Mkomazi/Tsavo ecosystem is one such area. TANAPA's management and administration of the Park since 2008 had resulted in a virtually stock-free park in which wild dogs could have a good chance of survival, linked to the Tsavo ecosystem in Kenya. When the dogs are reintroduced into an area as large as this ecosystem, with low numbers of domestic stock, plenty of prey species and standing water, they have a good chance of success.

Sangito Lema and Mshamba Mjema continued in their roles as senior keepers and we cannot emphasise enough how much we owe to these men for their tireless dedication to this species and this programme over so many years. Importantly, they are now employed by TANAPA to help ensure continuity and to learn from their wide experiences and knowledge.





In the base-camp, these keepers ensured daily that the dogs were managed and cared for according to the protocols established by the late Dr Aart Visee and which have been adhered to over 24 years which included management of pack composition, development and behaviour, zoo-technique, nutrition, preventative medicine and clinical work. The keepers reported any problems or signs of ill-health and the records of the breeding packs, litters, vaccinations and reintroductions to the wild were updated regularly. The TANAPA vet kept records of the clinical work undertaken.

The breeding compounds were cleaned out twice a day and maintenance of these compounds was constant. These compounds were substantially refurbished with steel-framed crush tunnels lined with strong steel wire and proper concrete floors, a double line of peripheral fencing, double entrance doors and sloped entrances for easier access for wheelbarrows bringing in the daily meat supply.

The dogs were fed daily with a balanced diet consisting mostly of meat with additional supplements and there was no failure in this daily meat supply. Cold storage of the meat was in the fridge/freezers in the butchery. We rebuilt an old Land Rover into a single cab with an extended rear pick-up. This had removable seating (on rails) with two rows of seats facing outwards for anti-poaching patrols and with the seats removed it was also used for the weekly trips (100 mile round-trip) to get meat and supplements for the dogs.

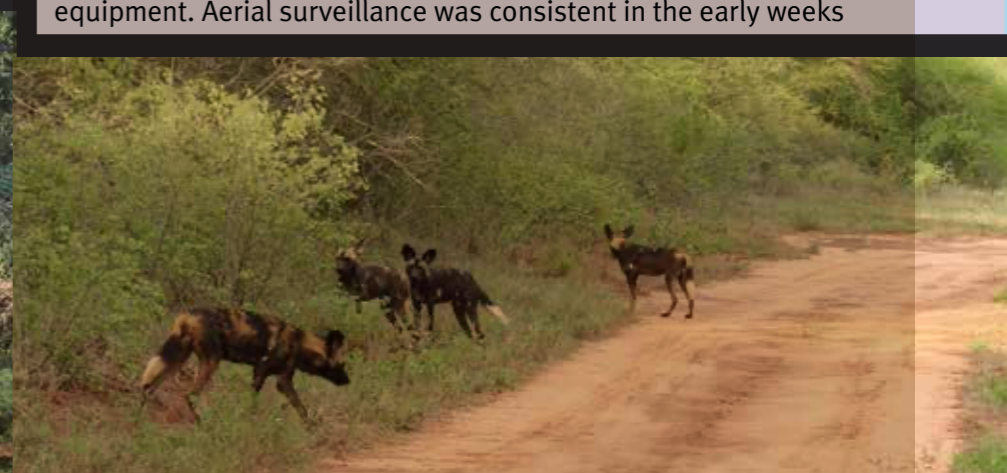
The dogs received vaccinations to try to immunise them against disease. The vaccination programme had been in place following protocols established many years ago. When we started the programme, it was said that rabies vaccinations did not work in the species. With thanks to research by Erasmus University, Rotterdam, it is now known that the African wild dog has to be vaccinated three times to achieve immunity. This research programme took 10 years and a trial was also undertaken with Artis Zoo Amsterdam on a vaccine for canine distemper. From 2000 onwards there was no outbreak of disease in the breeding programme. Cases of canine distemper had been recorded in Kilimanjaro region and in the Serengeti region in 2017 and other cases were recorded in the west of Tanzania.

We constructed two reintroduction compounds on the Mkomazi/Tsavo border and over the reporting period we extended one of these compounds in the Maore area which is close to a major water source. These compounds were positioned in a remote area of the border between the two parks, close to a large water source on the Tanzanian side and many small water sources on the Kenya side and in an area of adequate prey species. The siting of the reintroduction compounds was to try to mitigate the dogs heading towards human settlements.



Over those last two years in Mkomazi, we carried out five reintroductions of wild dogs and these were all done in partnership with TANAPA. Together with the TANAPA vet, Dr Emmanuel Macha, we selected the dogs and moved them over to the reintroduction compounds by aircraft or vehicle. A photo was taken of each dog on each side to have a record of the coat pattern and colour. One dog per release pack was fitted with the lightweight and streamlined VHF collar and one dog per release pack was fitted with a GPS collar supplied by TANAPA. Both collars had problems. The VHF collar had a limited range and the heavier GPS collar may restrict life in the wild. TANAPA are now in communication with Smart Parks in The Netherlands (who trialed their equipment in Mkomazi) and who have designed a lightweight GPS collar for the African wild dog which will be much lighter than the current GPS collars available and which is a very welcome development in new tech.

Aerial surveillance, foot patrols and vehicle patrols took place after each pack was released. The keepers remained at the reintroduction site for however many weeks was deemed necessary for each reintroduction pack and they went out on foot and in vehicles and up onto the high points in the area with the telemetry equipment. Aerial surveillance was consistent in the early weeks



although once the dogs had crossed into Tsavo West National Park in Kenya beyond a 10 mile radius, the aircraft was unable to track them. For the subsequent period, every time the plane was airborne, the VHF collar frequencies were being scanned.

We were in touch with the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) Tsavo West National Park authorities as well as other wildlife conservation groups in the Tsavo ecosystem with aircraft who offered support for the follow up on the reintroduced wild dogs. The Senior Park Warden for Tsavo West was a colleague and he kindly ensured that on the days of the reintroductions that the Kenya side of the border was clear of domestic stock. Domestic stock in the national park and the political nature of this problem had always been one of the major challenges. On the Mkomazi side of the border domestic stock incursion had been reduced to very low levels, with the laws for such incursions being respected, unlike the period from 1989-2008. This had been an important development for the wild dog reintroductions.

TANAPA sent in four of their Chief Park Wardens from the northern national parks (Mkomazi, Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Tarangire), along with their senior staff, for one of the reintroductions so they could attend the release of the dogs back to the wild. This group was led by the Zonal Senior Conservation Commissioner Northern Parks who made a speech of thanks to the Trust and the senior keepers. There is liaison between TANAPA and KWS and this also covers the wild dog programme.





Over that period, there were many sightings of reintroduced packs. One was of a large pack of 27 dogs together with pups, with 2 of the dogs from a reintroduction we had undertaken 18 months before; another pack of circa 7 dogs came and went from the Sanctuary; one pack of 15 dogs was seen on the boundaries of Tsavo West on a kill; one pack came through our camp and hunted on the firebreak; 2 dogs from an earlier translocation were seen at Kisima; another pack of 11 dogs with 4 pups were seen inside the Sanctuary all in good health and they remained there for six months; our staff and TANAPA staff had sightings whilst travelling on the main access road between our camp and the HQ – on one occasion the keepers were coming back from church and were able to watch a large pack of dogs that had been released one month earlier all looking in good condition. Information on reintroduced wild dogs was kept although it is not easy to determine what happens to each member of each reintroduction pack nor is it possible to influence where they range once released.

We also delivered community outreach and education through our environmental education programme ‘Rafiki wa Faru’ and this included education delivered on the African wild dog. TANAPA had their own community outreach programmes and we were hopeful that they would continue with our Rafiki wa Faru programme.

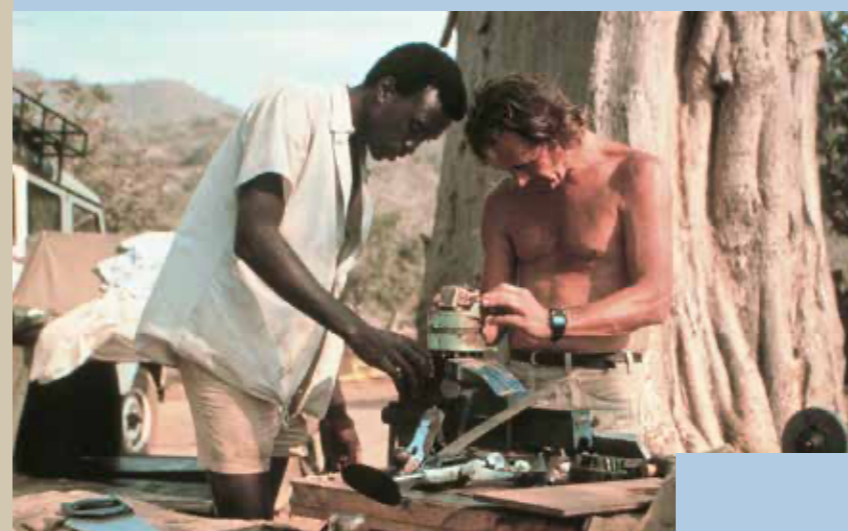
We were able to hand over to TANAPA the full infrastructure and equipment for this programme and 12 wild dogs in the breeding compounds that TANAPA were then responsible for, following our established systems. Our senior keepers remain employed by TANAPA for this programme. A new breeding group was then established at the base-camp - the TANAPA vet moved a male from one compound over to three females (sisters) in another - and a litter of pups was born as a result.

It is estimated that over the course of the project, over 200 African wild dogs were reintroduced into the Mkomazi/Tsavo ecosystem since 2005 when the first reintroduction took place. Overall there were increased sightings of African wild dog packs in the ecosystem and we left the national park knowing that packs of wild dogs were roaming in the wider Mkomazi/Tsavo ecosystem and that feedback is still coming in.



Wildlife areas such as the Mkomazi National Park are huge. Making the most efficient use of resources and equipment to both protect and develop these areas and make sure everything was always operational was a constant. We had to always look at the big picture with a conservation project in a large area such as Mkomazi and keep the infrastructure maintained and developing at all times. The plant machinery, vehicles and big equipment were essential to this development, much more so than many other facets.

Supporting these daily operations was a fully functioning and extensive workshop and this was a huge task with immense logistics. The maintenance of aircraft through to heavy plant machinery was a serious focus but a necessary one to make the operation run smoothly and keep the rhinos safe and the staff motivated. Every piece of equipment and every system we operated there had to be constantly maintained in our workshops or remotely out in the field, fuel had to be brought in bulk and stored, spares had to be sourced and purchased, and a daily supply of water provided in the middle of a remote, arid area. With the increase in rhinos and personnel, the requirements for general maintenance of the big machines and project vehicles doubled. And all of these things made the workshop the heartbeat of the operation.



In 1989 we, together with Wilfred Ayo, started the workshop with a table placed under the camp’s baobab tree. By 2019, the trained-up mechanics and their assistants had become all-round experts in diesel technology, hydraulics, welding and overhauling vehicles to extend their life. With the necessary tools, equipment and knowledge, vehicles were back up running within hours and even without the right equipment

or spare parts, the technicians became real masters in finding smart solutions.

SSRC generously donated a container, quad bikes, motorbikes, spares, tyres and uniforms, which had been planned and carefully put together over many months with help from Morad Belhaj. The container was converted with shelving and windows to house the Sanctuary fencing materials.



Before the handover took place, we cleared out a huge amount of scrap from the old yard, including the old Bedford lorry originally from Kora, and tidied up all the containers - a couple of lorry-loads of memories.

The Cessna aircraft was airborne daily when possible and sometimes up to three times a day. The patrols were a morale boost to men on the ground and to those in the more remote outposts. It was also ideal for moving equipment and mechanics out to the field when there were breakdowns or servicing was needed.

The closing down of the aircraft maintenance facility we used in Arusha resulted in having to move the plane to a maintenance facility in Nairobi. The mandatory Certificate of Airworthiness involved an inspector being sent up from the Tanzanian Civil Aviation Authority and considerable and lengthy attendant bureaucracy in both Dar es Salaam and Nairobi to sync the paperwork between the two civil

The refurbished Supercub aircraft was imported into Kenya from the US and then re-assembled, although this process was severely hampered by a series of snags, namely issues with the rigging and various structural issues that needed attention. An aircraft hangar was constructed but then taken down and will be used for the Kora project. Our son, Alex, obtained his private pilot's license and it was incumbent on him at that time to gain flying hours on the Super Cub when the re-assembly and bureaucracy was complete. The Supercub is an icon of wildlife conservation, but a tricky little thing!

We handed over the full infrastructure of the workshop to TANAPA, along with the hangar, containers, generators, diagnostic and operations rooms, carpentry workshop and a wide range of equipment and spare parts with which to uphold the daily operating systems and the rigorous maintenance schedules for the full range of plant



aviation authorities. It is now on the Kenya register. Although it underwent maintenance and an inspection once it arrived in Kenya, we later discovered that it needed an extensive and very thorough Check 3. It had done thousands of hours of patrols in Mkomazi.

machinery, vehicles, motorbikes, quad bikes, solar equipment, water storage systems, fuelling systems, communication systems, electrical systems and the extensive fencing systems.



Over the last two years of our time in Mkomazi, our outreach and education programmes continued and flourished. Now that they are handed over to TANAPA it is worthy reflecting on what has been achieved in the past thirty years, during which time our outreach programmes have become role models for conservation within communities.

The outreach programme was started in 1993 as a joint undertaking between the Trust and the Wildlife Division. The programme was initially coordinated by two lay missionaries, Harrie Simons and the late Truus Nicolassen, who had by that time already lived in Kisiwani village for seven years. They had initiated a programme of self-help development on a long-term basis. Their work centred mainly on education, medical assistance, women's groups, agricultural practices and water management. The women's groups dedicated their time and resources to health, irrigation, education, agricultural and economic issues, as well as raising the status of women in the villages. Close cooperation with the local communities was vital for the sustainable development of this precious national resource, whilst addressing the critical needs of the communities where possible.



We were able to fund the construction of an entire secondary school (including 8 classrooms, 2 science laboratories, staff administration offices and a computer room) which was staffed by Government teachers. It was opened in 1999 by the Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, Hon. Zakiya Meghji, and was later expanded for tertiary education. Although the Trusts provided the majority of funds for the construction of this school, it was a cooperative effort between the District, the village authorities, the Wildlife Division, the Ministry of Education and the Trusts. We also funded the construction and upgrading of classrooms in a further 30 primary and secondary schools.



Although the focus was on improving education, together we supported water management and water provision projects including the survey, drilling and sinking of a borehole at the Zange HQ which still provides water for the neighbouring village. Community conservation safaris were undertaken in the villages to discuss the history and aims of the project and to identify the priority needs of each village and to determine where the Trust and the Wildlife Division could assist.

Various other projects were supported which included deployment of heavy plant machinery to the villages for various municipal works, support for the annual national polio vaccination campaigns, support for three women's groups including the KUHAWA group, assistance for the Mkomazi Game Reserve Football Team, support for the refurbishment of a local medical dispensary, assistance towards bursaries for tuition fees for pupils to attend university, secondary school, primary school and for teacher training college. We funded teacher salaries and employed a district game officer to work alongside a teacher. We helped equip a physiotherapy unit for disabled children. We provided a water pump for a village, desilted rural dams for domestic stock, built and constructed dams within the reserve to provide alternative dry season water sources for large mammals.



The Rafiki wa Faru programme really was one of the best things we ever did for the school children in the local communities. The project was focused on the black rhino and also brought into focus the African wild dog, the rehabilitation of the National Park and the conservation efforts of the Trusts and TANAPA. It was very popular amongst the local communities, the schools and the students and was a very important component of attaining the overall conservation goals of the whole project. Based on the importance of winning the hearts and minds of the local communities, the teaching was about the flagship species – the black rhino – and engaging the learners in positive environmental action as an effort to help ensure the long-term security of the species. Save the Rhino, USF&WS, Chester Zoo and Tusk Trust helped develop and fund this programme and an education programme was developed by Chester Zoo with content designed to disseminate specific messages to the communities, using school children as ‘message multipliers’.

The strategy was based on building knowledge about conservation issues among the primary audience – the school students - and inspiring the participants to spread the key messages onwards to the community and look after their natural environment. A tightly choreographed programme was developed that addressed the main conservation issues affecting Mkomazi National Park, namely habitat restoration, conservation of endangered species and water management. At the same time, organised visits into the Park for the school children, their teachers, selected community groups and VIPs demonstrated the Rhino Sanctuary’s formidable security infrastructure both overtly and covertly. The content, delivery mechanisms and resources had an accompanying monitoring and evaluation programme designed to assess whether the objectives were being met.

800 schoolchildren, 150 school teachers and 100 elders and community leaders attended this programme every year.



School students were collected from the villages by the education officer in the brightly coloured Rafiki wa Faru bus, painted in the traditional tinga-tinga style, and brought into the Park. TANAPA personnel greeted the students as they entered the Park and rangers would talk to them about the history of Mkomazi and the long-term working partnership between their organization and the Trusts. Identification sheets of birds and mammals were handed out to the students for this journey and the bus stopped along the way so that they could identify the differences between the environment in the villages with human habitation and agriculture and the environment of the Park. After driving through the Park, the students arrived at the Kisima base-camp. There they were able to see the importance of the workshops and maintenance in running the Rhino Sanctuary and the infrastructural development of the Park. They visited the water-catchment project to learn how rainwater run-off is captured and stored as harvesting rain water in a semi-arid area such as Mkomazi takes a considerable amount of effort and planning.

The students then visited the African wild dog programme and were given a short talk by Sangito Lema, the senior keeper. He explained pack structure, hunting methods, the roles of the alpha male and female, how the pack raises pups and how reintroductions are carried out.

The main focus of Rafiki wa Faru was of course the black rhino, with a range of formal and informal lessons and activities. Some of the students were lucky enough to have a rhino sighting at the rhino observation bunker where rhino ID cards were also displayed, showing the rhinos’ names and how ear notches and horn shapes vary between animals. They met the rhino trackers and other Sanctuary personnel and heard about their daily lives spent protecting and monitoring the rhino. All of these individuals provided role models for the students.

The Education Centre sat on top of a hill with far-reaching views across the Sanctuary, Mount Kilimanjaro and into Tsavo National Park in Kenya. It had work-tables for the students, a range of educational materials and colourful hand-made wall hangings representing the main themes. A shaded picnic area was used during the lunch-time break. The students were given monoculars to look out over the landscape, explore the view and possibly to see a rhino.

Each participant was given a rhino-themed souvenir, both a hand-made rhino toy and a colourful rubber wristband, which provided visible reminders for the students of their day. Throughout the visit the students completed an activity book. This was theirs to keep and take home, providing another



opportunity to reach indirect audiences as they showed this book to friends and family. Plans were underway to revise the resources for the students and a new proposal was developed by the Community Engagement Manager and Exhibitions and Interpretation Manager of Chester Zoo following their site visit to Mkomazi. There were also plans to update and resource the observation bunker, the African wild dog seating area and the picnic area where the participants had their lunch.

TANAPA recently upgraded five more areas in Tanzania to national park status and has a dedicated TV channel, and this allowed participants to understand further how much more embedded wildlife conservation is becoming in the country.



We handed over the full infrastructure of this programme, the bus and the educational materials to TANAPA and they also had their own community policies through which a percentage of their income is returned to local communities for assistance on education, hospitals and water projects.

Overall, after 11 years of Rafiki wa Faru, many of the local students, teachers and community leaders had a better knowledge of conservation matters and were quicker to understand the issues surrounding wildlife conservation. We felt that there was a strong legacy of this programme in the local schools and local communities and that it was a very valuable and wonderful addition to the conservation efforts in the field and we do hope that TANAPA continue with this programme.



Gonja Mheza Rhino Vocational Training Centre

In 2012, a feasibility study was commissioned by SSRC in the Gonja Mheza area which found that the local community of Gonja (circa 14,000 people) was faced with an acute shortage of education and skilled training. At that time, the Gonja area was served by only two secondary schools and eight primary schools but without either an institution for higher education or a public vocational training centre (VTC). Many of the youth never proceeded to the secondary level as the education system in Tanzania required them to pass an exam to continue. Agriculture is the primary source of income in Gonja but the increase in population translated to land pressure and diminishing possibilities for the youth to earn sufficient income from farming. By providing youth with a practical education, the VTC project aimed to break the spiral of unemployment and this was a major and long-term project and undertaking that was generously supported by the SSRC.



After an extraordinary SSRC fundraising event in Holland, and in a partnership with three foundations, a huge and sustained effort went into constructing and equipping the Gonja Mheza Rhino VTC. In 2014 the foundation stone was laid by the Prime

Minister of Tanzania, Hon. Mizengo Pinda, and it was then formally opened by the RC Bishop of Same. The subjects being taught were welding/metal work, carpentry, masonry, electricity, automotive works and mechanics, farming and agriculture, and computer lessons.



The VTC is run as a multi-denominational school and children of all faiths are welcome. It was expanded to incorporate a secondary school and this added to both the number of students and the atmosphere of learning in general. More parents sent their children to the school, realising the benefits of a disciplined education in a rural environment. It was heartening to see the crossover with the secondary school students doing technical work and VTC students moving across to try to get their secondary school certificates as well as the VTC exam certificate. With this more thorough training, they can leave with a decent all-round education which puts them in better shape to face the job market.

A donation of equipment and machinery was raised by SSRC. Other donations raised were put into the construction teacher housing, to supporting bursaries for the poorest students, to topping up the teachers' salaries, to providing bulk food for the students, the construction of cow sheds and the purchase of cows so the students can have a regular milk supply and for the purchase of agricultural land at Lake Kalimawe for growing crops for the students and staff to help the school become more self-sufficient. In meetings over many years with the school board and the



RC Bishop of Same, Ted van Dam and Tony reiterated their emphasis on this self-sustainability. The generation of fees to run the school and products such as furniture produced at the school to be sold with the revenues invested back into the school would go some way to securing the longevity and professionalism of the school.

The network providers brought 3G to the village (after the huge efforts of Smart Parks to help rig up a 3G communication system for the VTC) and we spent a lot of time working on solar power systems for lighting, although solar power cannot drive the big machines for carpentry and this three-phase power will have to come from the main TANESCO supply.

Under the RC Diocese and Father Matthias, the VTC was a growing and improving school with approximately 300 students. Our meetings with the Principal and school secretary took place regularly and took many forms ranging from the direction the school was going in, plans for the future, exam results, teacher and student recruitment, maintenance of infrastructure, requests for funding and what chances the students from backgrounds of



incredible hardship are being given to go to the VTC and its secondary school. An emphasis on life skills, disciplined behaviour and respect for the environment was increasingly evident.

As with everything, there were of course

some areas that need tidying up. Everyone had their own ideas and advice, but it has always been our position that the school is driven by the RC Diocese of Same which has wide experience in running other educational establishments in Tanzania and this needs maximum commitment in the future of the school. The realities of life in a rural village with things like the interruption of power supply and water lines breaking are complicated and

challenging and we hope that TANAPA will help bring in a water pipeline from a separate source to back up the village water supply and increase the solar electricity supply.

The commitment of the RC Diocese and Same District Council to this school is strong. They had a vision for its future to provide a good education in a rural setting. Each time we visited we saw some progress towards a continued improvement that boded well for the future. We hoped that everything was in place for a prosperous, well run and self-sustaining future for this establishment.



Words cannot describe how heartbroken we were to have lost our elephant orphans. Mister Tembo had been with us for nearly seven years from that extraordinary day when he turned up at Ephraim's house on the airstrip. He weakened over a period of months despite intensive treatment and care. Major Tom, rescued from a village ditch in southern Tanzania, also weakened after a year and a half in Mkomazi. Zacharia Nassary, their keeper, had done a wonderful job with them both from the start often against very long odds and with huge challenges all along the way. We were all devastated by their loss.

Our ferocious caracal kitten slowly strengthened and we released her into the wild. Three months later she came back to the camp looking fairly thin and thirsty and from that point on visited us regularly. She was last seen dashing off into the bush early one evening ... fully pregnant.



We were very fortunate to have been able to welcome our Chairmen and trustees to the project; Bernard Mchomvu, Kinemo Kihomano, Rose Lugembe, Moritz Borman, Bob Marshall-Andrews, Charles Dobie and Andrew Mortimer. Meetings took place with the Chief Park Warden Abel Peter Mtui during these visits together with Ted van Dam of the SSRC.

It was a great honour to welcome HRH The Duke of Cambridge, Royal Patron of Tusk Trust, to the project in Mkomazi. The visit was part of a broader tour of range states of the black rhino in Africa with Tusk Trust and The Royal Foundation, and focused on the illegal wildlife trade and, specifically in Mkomazi National Park, the part that GAWPT had played in wildlife conservation and the protection of the black rhino. Tusk Trust has been a major supporter and conservation partner of GAWPT for over 25 years. We were also very pleased to welcome Charlie Mayhew and Sarah Watson of Tusk as well as other members of the Tour.

We were visited by the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Professor Adolf Mkenda; the TANAPA Board of Trustees chaired by General (Rtd) George Waitara; the Director of Wildlife, Dr Nsula; the former TANAPA Conservation Commissioner Dr Allan Kijazi, William Mwakilema, Dr Hezekiah Dembe, Witness Shoo, Herman Batiho, Martin Loibooki, Emmanuel Moirana, Chief Mafuru, Emmanuel Sisy and many other members of their senior management staff, chief park wardens and wardens; the Kilimanjaro Regional Commissioner, Anna Mghwira and the Same District Commissioner Rosemary Sitaki Senyamule; veterinary officers - Dr Peter Morkel, Dr Emmanuel Macha, Dr Idrissa Chuma, Dr Ernest Eblate, Dr Robert Fyumagwa.

The Parliamentary Committee for Environment chaired by the Deputy Minister for Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Hon. Constantine John Kanyasu visited as did the National Rhino

Steering Committee with the National Rhino Coordinator Philbert Ngoti and the board of trustees of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority.

Supporters, close friends, family and our colleagues in the wildlife world, technicians, advisors, and those giving so much practical help and support; the Marshall-Andrews; the Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the USA in Tanzania, Dr Inmi Patterson, and Bob Patterson; the Ambassadors of the Suzuki Rhino Club and Geordie Bloem, Ralf van Meer and Vincent Jorritsma of Nimag BV; Tom and Nancy Gallagher with George Mavroudis; Dr Rob Brett, Fauna and Flora International; Reggie Heyworth, Cotswold Wildlife Park and Gardens; Olly & Suzi; the board directors of Friends of Serengeti Switzerland; Hannah Brooks and Victoria Thomas, Chester Zoo; Peter Hays, Instarect Ltd; Christian Lambrecht, Rhino Ark; Dr Hezekiah Dembe, Rian and Lorna Labuschagne, FZS; Pepijn Steemers, Greenlink Ltd. the rhino team from Grumeti Reserves and Melle Van Iperen, Rotterdam Zoo rhino keeper; the Morkels, Dobies, Szaparys, James's, Bonhams, Dekkers, Masons, Rechsteiners, Freels, Pooles, Calkins, McIntosh's, Stirlings; Christianakis's, Mands; Mink Rae, Peter Silvester, Pierre-André Mourgue d'Algue, Jon Lee and Erica Anderson, Guillaume Bonn, Ruedi Sueter, Alexis Peltier, Michael Armitage and Galuh Sukardi, Victor Tesha, Nicole Verjus and Dr Belia Klaasen.

MWEKA College for African Wildlife Management sent in a group of students every year for educational talks and field visits on the endangered species programmes and infrastructural development. It was always good to talk to these young officers and wardens of the future and share the experiences of the Mkomazi Project with them.



As we have said before, our greatest resource was our human resource and we couldn't have been blessed with better people. Their unswerving dedication over so many years always inspired us to keep going and do even more. We worked in a harmony that was difficult to describe but we were always able to both trust their ongoing daily work and also act on many of their well thought-out suggestions. Our philosophy and model has always been to start at the bottom and work upwards and our staff in Mkomazi played a huge part in that principle and operating process, resulting in a great wildlife success story in Mkomazi. We owe much of the success of the project to them. We miss them all enormously and we hope they shine as well under their new bosses.

Elisaria Nnko – operations manager and part of the project since inception – a lifetime's dedication to the project and the wildlife of his country; **Isaya Elisa** – base camp manager of extraordinary reliability and trustworthiness; **Sangito Lema** – our wonderful senior wild dog keeper; **Emmanuel Metemi and Evans Goodlack** – highly skilled senior rhino trackers; **Wilfred Ayo** – workshop manager and right-hand man for so many years; and of course the Rhino Sanctuary security team, tracking team, fence teams, wild dog keepers, mechanics, machine operators, elephant orphan keepers, artisans and domestic staff.



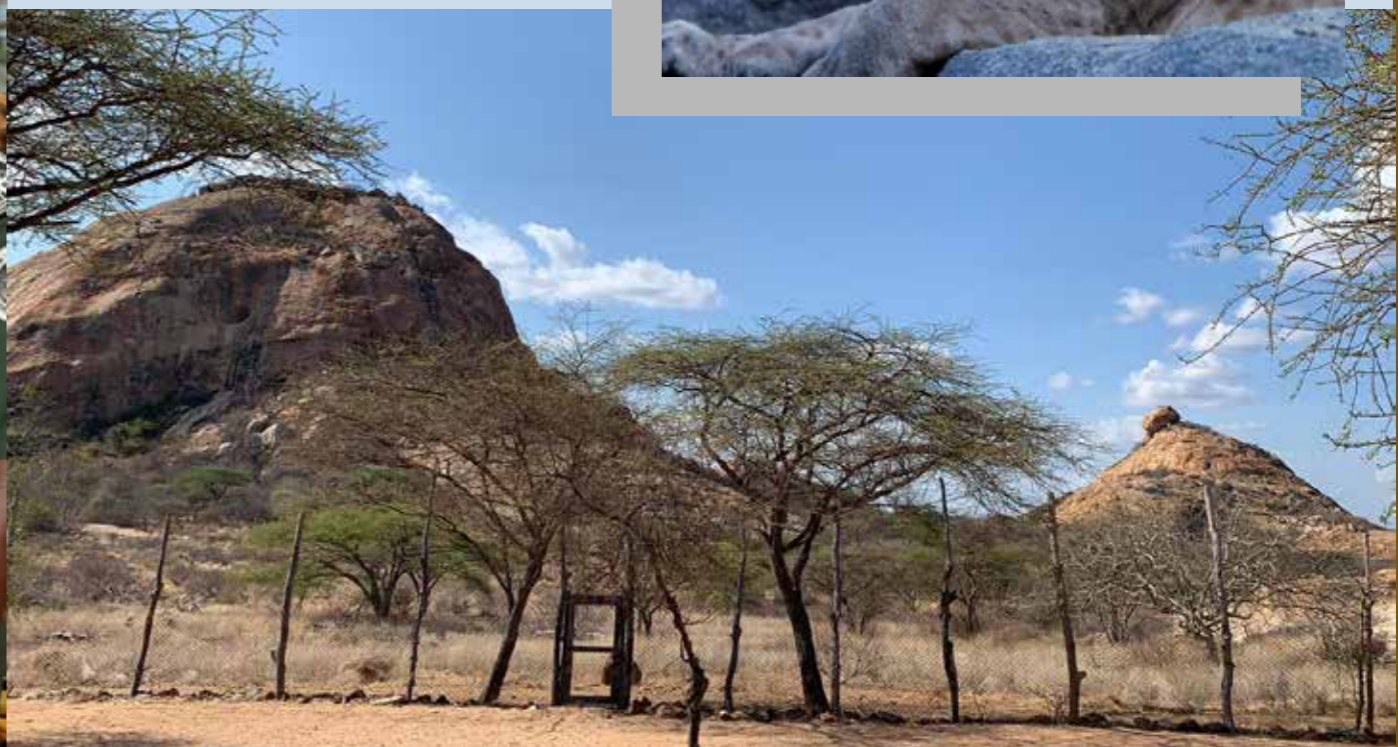
Background

Kora National Park covers 1,787 km² and is by far the largest protected area in the Eastern Conservation Area (ECA), and the third largest protected area in Kenya. The park is located in Tana River County, and was gazetted as a national park in 1989, prior to which it had been gazetted as a national reserve in 1973. Wildlife populations in the area are currently low although surveys have shown the area is rich in floral biodiversity.

Kora is one of the five protected areas that make up the Meru Conservation Area (MCA): Meru National Park, Bisanadi National Reserve, Kora National Park, Rahole National Reserve and Mwingi National Reserve. Meru and Kora are now physically linked by a bridge – Adamson's Bridge – which has been built over the Tana River.

Kora is located in a semi-arid region with an annual rainfall of between 250mm in the east to 500mm in the west. The altitude rises from 230m in the east to 560m in the south west. Dense Acacia woodland and Commiphora scrub bushland are the dominant vegetation communities, with patches of important riverine forests and habitat along the Tana River which, together with the shallow valley bottoms, the luggas (water channels) and the many rock outcrop inselbergs contribute to a complex and unique flora and fauna. The Royal Geographical Society undertook an ecological inventory of Kora (then a national reserve) in 1983.

Kora is inextricably linked to George Adamson who devoted most of his later life to its protection. In this he was joined by his brother Terence Adamson, and from 1971-1988 by Tony Fitzjohn. Together they focused on rehabilitating lions and leopards to the wild, whilst working on the management and development of Kora, then a national reserve. This included the organisational aspects of the project, the establishment of boundaries, roads and tracks, flying patrols, riverine forest protection, installation of communications, installation of workshops, vehicle maintenance and security.





In 1989, Tony and his supporting Trusts moved the main focus of their work to Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania which, following an intensive programme of environmental and infrastructural rehabilitation, was upgraded to national park status in 2008. In 1995, Tony was asked by the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Kenya to survey Kora National Park and the surrounding areas in order to produce an operational plan to reverse environmental degradation and fully protect the area for the future. Reports were prepared following this survey. At that time, the task looked fairly hopeful; Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) was rehabilitating both Meru and Kora National Parks, a general management plan for Kora was being drawn up, a KWS HQ was built and a bridge across the Tana River now linked the two parks. There were a number of significant set-backs but from this time onwards the Trust worked in close cooperation with KWS and undertook many key consolidation talks to provide some support for the long-term rehabilitation plan for Kora National Park, although the main thrust of the work of the Trusts for 30 years was in Mkomazi, Tanzania.

Work in Kora included the rebuilding of George Adamson's camp; establishment of a small workshop; installation of electrical, solar, communication and water systems; deployment of a tractor and trailer and vehicles to support KWS and their personnel; construction of roads and tracks; aircraft patrols; working with KWS on ground patrols; and community outreach work which has focused on medical and water projects, as well as education projects with Trusts for African Schools (TAS). A framework management plan and list of priorities was developed with Dr Ian Games and these were handed to KWS and the planning unit. An environmental impact assessment was undertaken with KWS for proposed fencing for the park and NEMA approval for this was sought and obtained. All the roads and tracks in Kora were GPS'd and a map was produced and handed to KWS.



Meetings have been held with KWS over many years on the Kora initiative and the long-term restitution and restoration of the park both at the KWS HQ in Nairobi and in Kora. Important meetings took place with the incoming Directors and senior management of KWS and with the former Chairman of the KWS Board of Trustees, Dr Richard Leakey. Bob Marshall-Andrews QC, Chairman of GAWPT, initiated and chaired meetings in Nairobi (organised by Steve Kameti of TAS) to discuss the future of Kora and were attended by the County Governors and their teams, KWS, Ministry officials, fence contractors and the former Vice President of Kenya, HE. Dr. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka EGH who attended as a GAWPT trustee.

Tony and Steve Kameti then embarked on a series of meetings to seek support for this Kora initiative. They met with General (Rtd) Mohamud M Mohamed-former Chief of the General Staff of the Kenyan Army; with Major (Rtd) Godhana - Governor of Tana River County, Hon. Ali Korane - Governor of Garissa County, and Hon. Charity Ngilu - Governor of Kitui County; James Kianda - Garissa County Commissioner, Hon. Abdikadir Aden - MP for Mbalambala, Hon. Ali Wario - MP for Tana River North, John Munuve - then MP for Mwingi North.



At the end of this trip they met with Hon. Aden Duale - former Majority Leader of the National Assembly and MP for Garissa Township. KWS drew up the general management plan for Kora and they maintained regular visits and contact with KWS and the communities. Guidance was received from our trustees, lawyers and colleagues. Northern Rangelands Trust provided valuable advice.

Following the handover of The Mkomazi Project in Tanzania, the Trusts then returned to Kenya to focus on the rehabilitation of Kora National Park, continuing extensive discussions with KWS for the long term stewardship, conservation, environmental protection and sustainable development of Kora and to forward the joint objectives.

Kora National Park is a degraded environment with low wildlife numbers as a result of overgrazing and poaching. There is a huge amount of field work to be done to rehabilitate Kora and re-establish it as a functioning protected area. However, both the habitat and wildlife can recover with protection and we are totally committed to this historic project and will do our part to ensure its success.

Update – 2020/21

It was an extraordinary year. The amount of time it took to re-settle in Kenya after being in Tanzania for 30 years had taken longer than we initially predicted. The huge disruption and impact of the Covid pandemic didn't help either - offices were closed and we staggered along until things began to slowly open up again.

Dreams become plans, plans become action and then progress. Plans are always subject to change as conditions, government policies and other parties come into play. What starts off as simple and straightforward can become complicated and political but a way forward must be found. We felt that we were beginning to move forwards at a pace more in line with a year without a pandemic.

The MoU with KWS had been re-drafted according to their various protocols, but we were aware that this was a very lengthy process as it had to be approved by both the Treasury and the Attorney-General's office. We received a letter from the KWS Director General's office with a formal acknowledgement of our involvement in Kora which enabled us to continue working in conjunction with KWS, as we have in the past, whilst the



MoU must follow its own lengthy process. Our history with KWS and the nominal process we believed was required allowed us to feel confident to move equipment in, potentially buy more and make a real re-start, working closely with KWS and their Wardens in the field and following all the protocols.

Discussion with the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife culminated in a visit by the Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Najib Balala, to Kampi ya Simba. It was an honour to welcome him and discuss the future. There are plans for an integrated Eastern Conservation Area, including the well-established Meru National Park, Kora National Park and Bisanadi National Reserve. It is exciting that KWS are looking at this more as a landscape project rather than a single site intervention. We assured KWS that we will align ourselves with their plans for the area.

We brought in a small amount of equipment from Tanzania (tractor and trailer, vehicle, generator and workshop equipment), a near Herculean task. Both the aircraft (Cessna 206 and Supercub) needed extensive work and overhauls, especially after the Cessna had been sitting on the ground for many months and there were rigging problems with the Supercub but both were then ready for work.

We went up to Kora regularly to fix up our long-standing - if slightly archaic and authentic - base-camp in Kora (Kampi ya Simba). We had discussions with the local villages and Trusts for African Schools, our partner for 15 years in community-conservation, who continued their work in the villages surrounding the Park and extended their sphere of operations as well.



The political will developed to turn Kora around and KWS worked hard in the field and cleared the western Kora boundary line from the bridge into Meru National Park across the Tana River to where the back road comes in from the Ukambani area, giving them fast access to the KWS Kora Patrol Base on the Kampi ya Simba airstrip.

The river road, essential to any proper monitoring of the area and prevention of riverine forest destruction, must still be addressed and appeared to be our first job. It means bringing in plant machinery which, when the river road is complete, will go on to clear the other tracks in the Park that Terence Adamson opened up years ago in George Adamson's time. Years ago the Trust mapped these roads and tracks using a

GPS and we then produced a detailed map of Kora for KWS.

As much as it would be in the long-term interest of the Park, fencing the two inland sides of the 'Kora Triangle' was just too expensive to consider at that time. The eastern boundary will have a cut-line cleared, inside the Mitamyisi (Mojo) lugga (seasonal riverbed), community land will be established and programmes initiated by Northern Rangelands Trust for the communities to preserve and protect that boundary of the Park, in conjunction with KWS.

It is hoped that the western boundary, incorporating the Mwingi National Reserve will in time be fenced and Kitui County have already cleared the line in



airstrips in this very difficult area which serves as the drainage system for Ukambani into the Tana River, and we are confident that suitable and strategically placed airstrips will be sited and developed.

The KyS staff have protected the camp for many years, working in conjunction with the KWS rangers at the airstrip outpost, and kept it safe and tidy but there was a lot to be done. We refurbished the camp and replaced the camp peripheral fencing. Much of the damage to the structures was due to termites taking over the camp and several of the buildings were in danger of collapse. The structure walls were



anticipation of this, but even the Counties took a hit as central government revenues declined. There was huge local support for this to be done as it will go some way to bringing peace to these communities from environmental destruction through over-grazing, illegal charcoal burning and cattle theft in an area of very low rainfall.



re-fabric'd (hessian, chicken wire, cement) and the structure roofing was redone with locally cut poles. Piping and electrical wires that had been chewed by rats were repaired, water systems upgraded

and we increased the solar capacity and put more lighting in. The big container was cleared out and cleaned up.

As the plant machinery makes inroads into opening up Kora it will also create the line for the planned wildlife programmes. Having witnessed the slaughter of the rhinos in Kora in the early 70's, George Adamson and Tony had hoped it might have been feasible to restock the park with rhino. They estimated that there were at least a hundred in Kora before the slaughter really got underway. As with Mkomazi, the basic infrastructure must come first. The plant machinery will also carve out several new

A small workshop was established in Kampi ya Simba and we got the old Range Rover going that had been sitting there for eight years. The old Massey tractor - that works with a water bowser and pump to bring the water out of the Tana River for base-camp supply and to supply the KWS ranger outpost - was overhauled. Bulk fuel was collected in drums and stored in Kampi ya Simba for ongoing field work. The MF480 tractor and trailer were brought into Kenya from Tanzania and taken up to a village close to the Kora boundary and

off-loaded there and driven in. This added much needed equipment to the initial push to get going with the necessary field work. Like the early days in Mkomazi, dragging a tree behind the old tractor helped to clear the airstrip and some of the tracks around Kampi ya Simba and the base of the Kora rocks.



We plan on bringing in a JCB which is more suitable for the Kora environment than a bulldozer. The supplier has Kenya-wide coverage and is already servicing a number of machines in the Garissa area, hence will be able to get technicians to the machine fairly quickly to avoid downtime. In order to make better roads that last longer, we will grade the cleared roads. Tony weighed up the costs and benefits of bringing in a CAT D6 bulldozer but felt it was too big and would also need a low-loader pulled by a tractor to move it around. The JCB is in our DNA and we would be happy to have this multi-tool to do all the work – a little bit slower perhaps but probably tidier with a lot more environmental concern.

The radio communication system had broken down as the solar panels had been stolen off the radio repeater on the top of the Kora hill. The antenna and repeater were still there and we will have to replace the system and upgrade the repeater. New solar panels and a controller were bought, and handheld radios will be programmed. A WiFi system was installed and worked well with a booster and at that time was better than a satellite system option. We will plan the installation of a LoRa network system and use contour mapping programmes to site the geo-tracking network antennas. This Smart Parks system was pioneered in Mkomazi and could play an important



role in the Kora project to help both the management of operating and maintaining infrastructure, plant machinery, vehicles, gates etc., as well as the wildlife programmes. It is an advanced sensor solution built as a network infrastructure which runs without any internet connection which is extremely useful in a remote area. Once the infrastructure is installed it can be adapted to work for the wildlife programmes.

The Cessna 206 (5Y-DOG) was imported into Kenya from Tanzania and it underwent the inspections and general maintenance for the mandatory Certificate of Airworthiness. The aircraft was on the tarmac at the Wilson Airport maintenance facility in Nairobi for many months without being flown whilst it then underwent the long bureaucratic process necessary to deregister it from the Tanzanian Civil Aviation Authority and register it with the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority. There are very few maintenance facilities in Nairobi that deal with piston engine light aircraft and this, combined with the length of time it had been on the tarmac, had resulted in all sorts of snags and minor problems developing. An engineer came in and these problems soon became apparent and



were worked on. In the end we undertook virtually a complete Check 3 over an extensive period of time which is standard for an aircraft that has been standing for a long period of time. We then moved the aircraft to a maintenance facility in Naivasha which specialises in piston engine light aircraft.

The Supercub (5Y-WLN) had been imported into Kenya from the USA and during the re-assembly in Nairobi, it had been rigged wrongly. Once these problems were pinned down, it was re-rigged and the entire suspension and undercarriage were changed and many spare parts were manufactured to spec. Flying training on type has been undertaken and in light of the problems with this aircraft, updated training is scheduled.

We work with QGIS and Ark-GIS contour mapping to site the strategically placed airstrips which will have to be constructed in this difficult terrain. A considerable amount of ground surveying will be needed in the thick bush of Kora to determine the correct lines and drainage. The JCB will then carve out these new airstrips in this very difficult area which serves as the drainage system for Ukambani into the Tana River and existing airstrips will be rehabilitated.

This does all sound a little unexciting but the



groundwork must be laid, as it was in Mkomazi, before the wildlife programmes start to come in. Kora will be much more difficult than Mkomazi in terms of the field work to be done, but we feel we are up to the challenge and at least we're starting with a JCB and not half a dozen men with pangas! The other big positive is that we don't have to guess the

road alignments - they are all in place from the road networks that Terence Adamson pioneered all those years ago based on the many elephant trails.

It was very good to meet the Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Najib Balala, and discuss the future. This meeting was also attended by the Director of Conservation to the Ministry, Ali Kaka, the Senior Assistant Director Parks and Reserves, Michael Wanjau and the coordinator for TAS, Steve Kameti. Meetings have taken place with the KWS Director General, Brig. (Rtd) John Waweru; former Director General Prof. Charles Musyoki; Assistant Director Eastern Conservation Area, Bakari Chongwa; and the Warden of Kora National Park, Augustine Langat.



Peter Hays of Instarect Ltd., who upgraded the entire Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary fence line, visited to look at terrain and work out what logistics would be needed for the various proposed fencing projects. Bert Leak from Big 5 Protection came in to look at the whole project, give his perspective and add to the proposals, including specialist tracking and awareness training. Surveys for a planned sanctuary area for wildlife programmes will continue as per discussions with KWS and will be undertaken with an experienced wildlife sanctuary manager. It was also very good to welcome Ian and Jane Craig, Gill Marshall-Andrews and Stephen Kameti of TAS, Jon Lee Anderson and Guillaume Bonn, James and Nella Hutchings, Kam and Andy Lall, Pepijn Steemers and the late Capt Ian Lamiyan.

The Trust has undertaken valuable community outreach work in the past and this has included joint projects with African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) focused on relief support, a medical dispensary and Flying Doctor Service clinics visits to Asako village; improved water supply and sanitation in Asako village; and the purchase, construction and installation of a water windmill pump Asako village.

Education initiatives continue together with TAS who came in to provide valuable educational work in the surrounding communities. The Trust assisted TAS with a fencing project for two secondary schools (Kora Secondary School and Mitamyisi Secondary School) through the provision of school gates. TAS support 7 schools in the communities surrounding Kora National Park, always in the company of Stephen Kameti whose role is to integrate TAS into the social and corporate responsibility of KWS.

Northern Rangelands Trust have offered to come in with their highly successful model of community integration involving both development and education and this will take us a much needed stage further in this field.

We will work out of the old base-camp initially but do need to build a proper workshop, hangers for the aircraft and employ a full-time mechanic/driver, machine operator and road construction teams. Better re-supply routes need to be worked out and access roads improved and then we can really say that we are "On The Way".

We are committed to the endeavour to save this important and beautiful part of East Africa.



We are, as always, tremendously grateful to our Royal Patron, HRH Princess Michael of Kent. Our most sincere thanks go to our Chairmen - Bernard Mchomvu, the late and much missed Palle Rune, Bob Marshall-Andrews and Moritz Borman. And to our wonderful trustees, Hon. Treasurers and board directors who have done so much to support the work in the field, give wise counsel and play active roles in the daily running of the trusts. Astrid Harbord and Jake Thomson joined the UK trust and contributed so much on the fundraising front. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the lawyers, accountants and administrators of the various trusts.

We undertook many trips to Dar and Arusha for trustees meetings, and importantly for a key meeting with the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Prof. Adolf Mkenda. During this meeting we advised the Permanent Secretary that the Trust had made a decision to hand the project over to TANAPA. There followed a meeting between the TANAPA Board of Trustees (chaired by General Waitara), the TANAPA Conservation Commissioner and senior management and our own board of trustees to draw up the framework for the handover. Two working committees were assigned to this endeavour and regular meetings took place with our trustees and legal secretary to determine the terms of the handover with TANAPA. We are again very grateful to our chairmen, trustees, board directors and legal advisors in Tanzania, the UK and the USA for the huge efforts, guidance, energy and time that they put in to the orderly handover and transition.

Before the pandemic hit, we were fortunate to be able to travel to hold meetings with our trustees, our board directors and with our major supporters and long-standing colleagues and friends.

To the USA for Tony to meet with the board directors of the Trust and with major supporters and close working colleagues in the wildlife conservation world and good friends (Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, Marina L Schreyer Charitable Trust, Swordspoint Foundation, Newman's Own Foundation, Praglin Family Trust, Laurence Israel Foundation, Stop Poaching Now, and various private supporters); Tony also travelled to Florida to meet Jo Salome who had rebuilt the Supercub.





To the UK for trustee meetings and the Friends of Mkomazi dinner in London. Whilst in the UK the trustees were briefed by the legal counsel in Tanzania. We held meetings with Tusk Trust, Save the Rhino International, Chester Zoo, The Rufford Foundation, Port Lympne Wild Animal Park and Tony gave a talk at the Royal Geographical Society as a guest of the Country Restoration Trust.

To Germany with Moritz and Hilla Borman.

To Switzerland To Switzerland to meet with the trustees of the MLSCT who have given us long term support.

To The Netherlands for Tony to brief the board of directors of SSRC and we then returned there for an SSRC event held at the splendid Louwman Museum. Ted van Dam gave a talk to the audience about the long history between the project and SSRC. Whilst there we met with the Smart Parks team and Tony met with the Chairman of African Parks.

To the Czech Republic for Tony to meet with the directors of the Dvur Kralove Zoo.

To South Sudan with Lynn Lourie, Craig Mitchell, John Moller and Dr Ian Games on a recce to look for the Northern White Rhino

We are so very grateful to you all for the extraordinary support, understanding and trust in us over so many years. We are indeed fortunate to have so many close friends and colleagues.

With our sincerest thanks to you all,

Tony and Lucy Fitzjohn
George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust
Tony Fitzjohn George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust



George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust - UK

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Our former Chairman: The late Palle Rune
Our former Trustee: The late Charlie Simpson

Wildlife Authorities

Tanzania: Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources
Tanzania National Parks
Kenya: Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife
Kenya Wildlife Services

Charities, Foundations, Trusts and Grant Giving Institutions with whom we have built close and enduring relationships, and to our friends and colleagues within these organisations who have done so much to support the work of the Trusts

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Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation
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As always, our sincerest thanks to the **Friends of Mkomazi**, many of whom have been supporters of the Trusts since the very start– over 30 years –financially and materially. They have been part of our financial stability and are friends in the true sense of the word.

Companies

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Innovam (through Suzuki Rhino Club)
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Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health (Alonso Masias)
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Dr Idrissa Chuma
Dr Emmanuel Macha
Dr Ernest Eblate
Dr Robert Fyumagwa

There is a remarkable depth of support for all of those associated with the work of the Trusts. To everyone behind the scenes who gives of their time and advice, donations of gifts in kind and to family and friends, we simply want to thank you all for your terrific support wherever you are and however you connect



**Speech by Tony Fitzjohn, OBE
Field Director,
Wildlife Preservation Trust Fund, Tanzania.**

General Waitara, Members of the Board, Dr Kijazi, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1989 I received a letter from the Director of Wildlife of Tanzania. It was an invitation to assist in the restoration and rehabilitation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, 3,270 sq kilometers of wilderness and spectacular landscape which together with Tsavo National Park in Kenya forms one of the largest protected ecosystems in Africa.

It was a daunting task. By 1989 the Reserve was in a dire state of neglect - widespread commercial poaching and the massive illegal incursion of cattle had degraded the land and reduced the abundant wildlife to near extinction. What wildlife remained was pursued by sport hunters of doubtful integrity.

And so for us, thirty years ago, The Mkomazi Project was born. The Wildlife Division Project Manager, Hezekiah Mungure, had started working on the Project the year before and it was a huge relief and pleasure for us to work with such a dedicated, knowledgeable and long-serving wildlife officer here.

In the beginning the Trust had two assets of limited value: me, and a Massey Ferguson tractor purchased with a bank loan guaranteed by the trustees of the newly formed GAWPT in the UK. Both of us are thirty years older, both of us have required increasingly serious maintenance but we have both contributed in our own way to the extraordinary story of conservation and regeneration which followed and which has become a model throughout Africa. But I did not do it alone.

First, I had the most skilled, adaptable, tough and dedicated Tanzanian staff led by the inspirational Elisaria Nnko, without whom nothing would have been achieved. His commitment, integrity and ability to put a team together and keep them together has been the binding force for 30 years and without him I would have been lost. He has also made me a better man.

This team grew over thirty years to over 50 with mechanics, plant operators, rhino trackers, fence teams, wild dog keepers and tracker dog handlers and ... well ... whatever it took to get the job done...

We were so very fortunate here in Tanzania to have the best guidance and true friendship from our Chairmen and trustees Bernard Mchomvu, Charles Dobie, Kinemo Kihomano, Rose Lugembe, Iddi Mbita – most of whom are here today, along with Elisaria.

And to our Chairmen and who have given us so much but sadly passed on – in Tanzania, Brigadier General Hashim Mbita, Solomon Liani, Costa Mlay; in England, Dr Keith Eltringham; in The Netherlands, Dr Aart Visee; and in Kenya, Palle Rune, I take this opportunity to pay my deepest thanks and respects and with the hope that we'll all meet up again in the Afterlife.

The George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trusts in the UK, the USA, Germany, The Netherlands and Kenya recruited friends and supporters from many backgrounds dedicated to the endeavour. Their contributions provided the base from which our part of the Project started. Small beginnings. As the Project grew, many other supporters contributed on an international basis. And of course, we have worked together with the Wildlife Division and particularly since Mkomazi's designation as a National Park, with TANAPA, the partners to whom we now pass on the Project and all its responsibilities and under whom we have seen the Park taking great strides towards its former glory.

I would like to emphasise that this project has been a wonderful success and Lucy and I would like to thank Dr. Allan Kijazi for his years of understanding and support and more recently Chief Park Warden Abel Mtui who has made this last year as comfortable as he can for us. Most of all - of course - and far more important than the tractor - has been the non-stop administrative support of my wife Lucy. We don't have the privilege and comforts of town offices staffed with experts, accountants, secretaries, and politicians - it's all done from our camp. Just the two of us and Elisaria. Lucy's daily input has kept us functioning in a modern world that seems keener on paperwork than fieldwork, as well as raising 4 children in a remote and lonely environment since they were all a month old. We all owe her a huge debt.

And The Mkomazi Project has been, indeed, the most extraordinary success. It has included the construction of 800 kms of roads; the re-clearing of boundaries; dam de-silting and construction; the installation of radio networks; drilling for water and underground storage tanks; the clearing and maintenance of essential airstrips and fire breaks; the establishment of a base camp; over 4,000 hours of aircraft patrols and surveys; GPS mapping of the infrastructure, deployment of many vehicles and plant machinery, most donated by supporters and friends; the construction of a purpose built workshop and the setting up of the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary.

This work, in partnership firstly with the Wildlife Division and then TANAPA, led to spectacular changes in the habitat and the wildlife populations of Mkomazi. Illegal grazing and indiscriminate burning has now been largely eradicated. Wildlife has returned in substantial numbers, in particular, the elephant. By 1989 their numbers had been reduced to just 11 individuals. Now up to 600 elephant have been counted during the wet season. Even five days ago we saw well over 300 with young, in one relaxed herd near Maore Ndogo.

This transformation has included intensive programmes to preserve endangered species, centered on the Black Rhino and African Wild Dog.

The Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary has been constructed covering 55 square kilometers. Through a series of complex international operations 15 black rhinos were translocated to the Sanctuary from South Africa, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. The breeding population is now 33, with many pregnant females. I cannot emphasise enough how much we owe to the teams that started off digging the fence post holes and then moved on to become the rhino trackers and fence repair and maintenance gangs in both difficult and arduous conditions. And our early-days security, recruited by Brigadier General Hashim Mbita, resulted in us being one of the very few rhino facilities in Africa that hasn't lost a rhino to poaching.

The African Wild Dog programme has taken a long-term view to the survival of this species with continued breeding and releases back to the wild with over 200 dogs being reintroduced into the Mkomazi / Tsavo ecosystem. We estimate that there is a good survival rate that then carries on breeding and there have been increased sightings of wild dog packs in the ecosystem.

If any real impact is going to be made for the sake of these endangered species, these have to be programmes that go on forever.

Our outreach programmes have become role models for conservation within communities. They include the construction of a secondary schools with science labs, computer rooms, a headmaster's house and staff quarters. As a result, the village of Kisiwani now has a secondary school student population of over 300. In the village of Gonja, we constructed and equipped a Vocational Training Centre and secondary school with capacity for 300 students. Classrooms have been constructed in 30 other schools. The Rhino Sanctuary has an environmental educational centre with full audio/visual equipment. Children arrive in a 28-seater bus lead by Elisaria together with our head rhino tracker. It's important that the school children, teachers and community leaders that attend this programme every year interact with those actually doing the job on the ground.

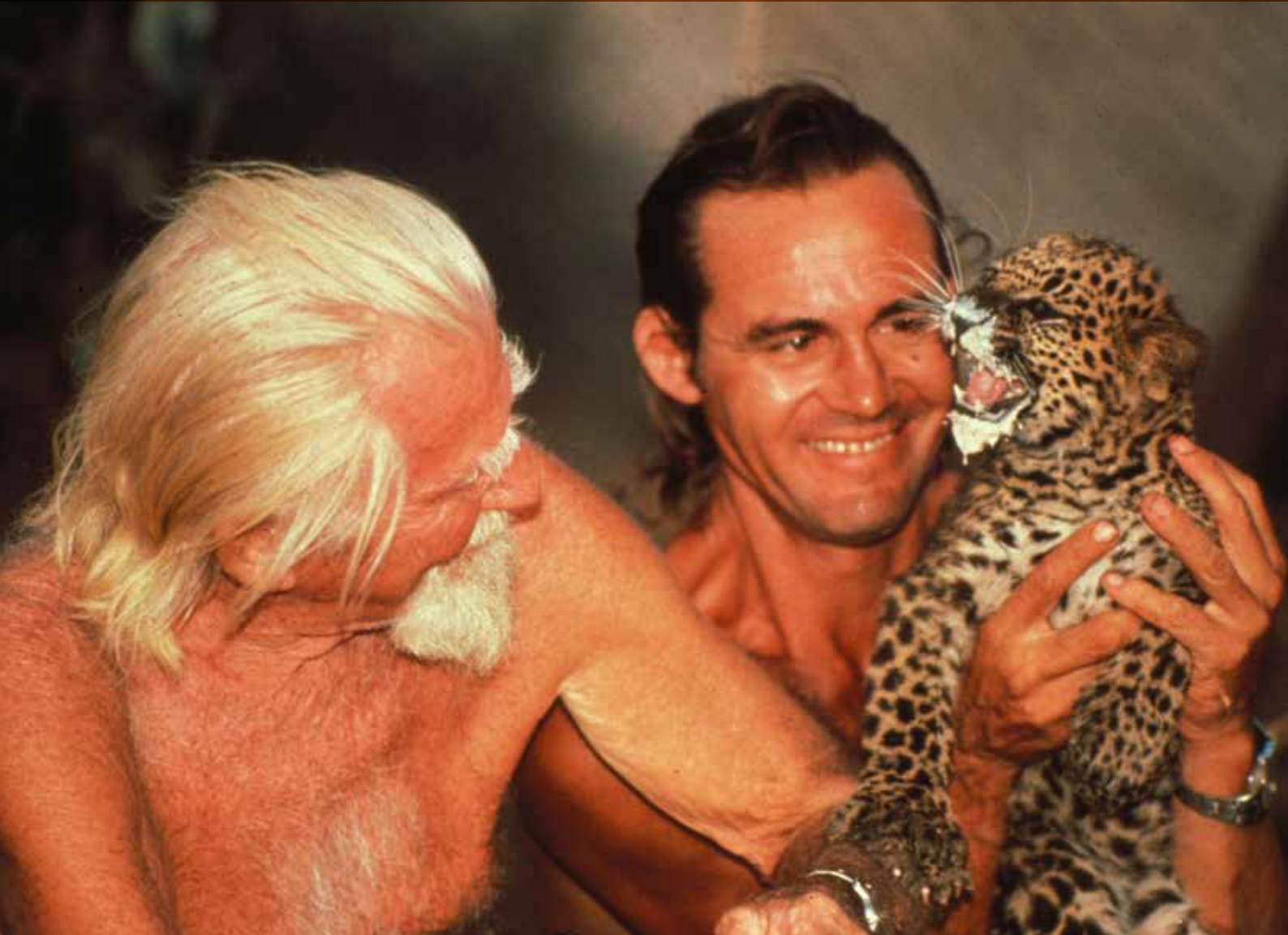
I have been fortunate to receive a few awards but I am well aware that these awards were not just for me but for the magnificent team, partners, supporters and friends who together have made the success of the Project an international model for rehabilitation and conservation.

But now the time has come for us to leave after 30 years. As we do this, it is both a cause for celebration and, for me and my family, a time of great sadness. We hand over the projects to TANAPA in the best possible order and with all our dedicated staff, along with the necessary infrastructure, plant machinery, vehicles and equipment to ensure the continued success of a Project which demonstrates above all that with total dedication, and together, it is possible to reverse what at times appears to be the catastrophic and inevitable process of the degradation of the Natural World.

On behalf of myself, my family, Wildlife Preservation Trust Fund, the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trusts in England and America and our many supporters and friends, I wish you all the very best of luck.



GEORGE ADAMSON
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