In this issue:

Page 2 NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS
By Paul Allin, Research Co-Ordinator

Page 3 NDLOVU BUSH CAMP NEWS
By Valeria van der Westhuizen, Media Liaison

Page 6 MAMBAS IN ACTION
By Valeria van der Westhuizen, Media Liaison

Page 7 BUSY BUSH BABIES!
By Lewyn Maefala, Project Manager

Page 9 THANK YOU TO SPONSORS, DONORS AND PARTNERS

Photos: Linda Crawford
NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

During the middle of the wet season each year we conduct our grass survey to establish what grass density and diversity survey. This is a long-term ecological monitoring program that tells us a lot about the general health of the veld. Each year during the middle of summer we identify grasses and determine their densities across a representative portion of the reserve. The resulting data says a lot about the overall quality of grasses, how many animals we can sustain and how vegetation has responded to precipitation. As we did last year we conducted this on both OWNR and the new conservancy. The data will be shared in our next quarterly report but initial figures show better grass coverage in OWNR than in the new conservancy.

Oli Staehli, came to visit us for a proof of concept study for an exciting new project, which will be for his Masters. Oli’s BSc used audio recorders which processed wolf calls in real-time in Switzerland to act as an early warning system of wolves’ locations to be used to mitigate human wildlife conflict. He now wants focus on African species with the same objective of reducing human wildlife conflict. This visit Oli deployed a number of different audio recorders in OWNR to see which frequencies of various animals can be identified and if this can be used for accurate detection of these species. Our hopes are that it will work for elephant, lion and hyena.

Having volunteered with us last August Elwenn Le Magourou has returned, this time to do her MSc thesis research. She will be looking at a very understudied aspect of savanna ecology, meso-carnivore abundance. Apex predators, such as lion and hyena, are known to actively kill smaller predators, which can have big impact throughout the trophic pyramid. Elwenn will be using camera traps in both OWNR and the new conservancy to see what impact lions and hyena have on the populations of meso-carnivores. This should lead to a better understanding of the dynamics within the predator guild and what management implications this has for protected areas managing for a greater biodiversity.
We found some aliens!

In February we targeted Common Cocklebur, Mexican Poppy, and Red Sesbania. These beautiful in appearance plants take all the nutrients from the soil, hence, non-invasive plants have to compete for nutrients to survive. But there is more to it when it comes to the aliens! We remove the invasive plants before they seed so that the seed bank of the local plants is protected and the biodiversity of the local grasses is preserved.

---

Measuring browning capacity of trees

Trees form an important component of the available biomass for herbivores and are therefore vital to our understanding of the animals our protected areas can sustain. Utilising the BECVOL method we are calculating our browse capacity and this helps management make informed decisions on the population management of our animals.

---

Volunteers joined The Mambas in the field

Our volunteers joined the Mambas team for a snare sweeping operation and covered a good portion of the area. The Mambas found one snare, and showed the volunteers how a snare was attached to a tree and how it would close if an animal got trapped.

---

United to fundraise

In February we took part in one more market where we sold our merchandise. This time all our volunteers and interns joined us at our stall. We are so proud of having great young people volunteering with us who support our fundraising initiatives as well.
February was very rich in sightings. We saw many Ndlovu (Shangaan word for an Elephant) - This is where the name of our Bush Camp comes from! During fieldwork days, our volunteers, interns and staff saw a pack of Wild Dogs, a pride of young lions, Black Rhinos, a stallion of zebras and Nyala antelopes.
Welcome back, Simon!

Two years have gone by quickly, and there are so many wonderful people, our allies and friends whom we had not seen during that time. We were happy to welcome Simon Jones, CEO of Helping Rhinos (UK charity) in February.

In February our team saved a baby Banded Mongoose (*Mungos mungo*). This tiny fella was lost in the bush, screaming for help. We picked the baby up, took to camp and handed to Jay Spencer who had already successfully rehabilitated and raised a baby squirrel before.

The little Tinkie was safe, and now is doing very well: eats well, plays a lot, and explores the local surroundings under the supervision. When the mongoose grows up and becomes stronger, she will eventually leave for the bush to live her life among other mongoose. All smaller rescued animals stay in our vicinity only temporarily until they are ready to live in the wild.

We were proud to show Simon what we have achieved for the last 2 years regardless the pandemic: the new Bush Babies education centre at Maseke, new vegetable gardens, and our work in communities.

We are thanking Simon Jones and Helping Rhinos for your continuous work on supporting Transfrontier Africa and its major conservation projects The Black Mambas and The Bush Babies.
MAMBAS IN ACTION

11 snares found in February

The Mambas continued searching and removing snares from the bush. In February our teams found a total of 11 snares and the bushmeat poachers tracks.

All snares were removed and the tracks photographed and reported.

A female Kudu saved from a snare! We came on time

In February The Black Mambas and Transfrontier Africa had a successful animal rescue case. A female Kudu antelope was found stuck in a cable snare which caught the animal by its neck and a leg. The snare was safely removed and Kudu immediately released without any serious injuries detected.

"We protect African biodiversity"

"Seeing an animal in the bush is always a reason to be proud of being their guardians", say The Black Mambas. In February the teams managed to photograph themselves with African animals they protect daily by putting boots on the ground.

Photos: Transfrontier Africa NPC
SPORTS WEEK BEFORE SCHOOL

Early February our Environmental Monitors educators supported the Bush Babies students during their sports week at school. Because "all kids need is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them" - Magic Johnson

INDIGENOUS TREES WALK

Together with Silonque Phomolong we have managed to take learners from Pondo combined school on an indigenous tree walk. Mr. Jackson and our manager Lewyn Maefala shared tree facts and broadened the learners' knowledge about the local indigenous trees. We are grateful to Silonque, Spar Phalaborwa Gate (KNP) for the catering and Mr. Tete from the Lulekani Taxi Association for the transportation.

WE REBUILT OUR VEGETABLE GARDEN!

As we were upgrading our Bush Babies Education Centre, we also had to rebuild our vegetable garden. The Bush Babies warmly welcomed Transfrontier Africa volunteers and interns who worked the whole day under in heat and helped us tremendously. Huge thanks to Der Touristik for sponsoring the materials for the garden.
"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together"
- African proverb

We would like to say a big THANK YOU to all our sponsors, donors and fundraising partners:


Without your support, it would be impossible for us to continue helping African wildlife and people.

Copyright @2022 Transfrontier Africa NPC, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
media@transfrontierafrica.org