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Page 7 THANK YOU TO SPONSORS, DONORS AND PARTNERS
The Black Mamba Alliance is a group of companies and individuals who came to the rescue of The Black Mambas All-Women Anti-Poaching Unit and The Bush Babies Environmental Education Program.

Why did we need urgent help?

After enjoying almost 10 years of financial assistance from the South African Government (Expanded Public Works Program of The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries in South Africa), the Black Mambas APU, along with 2300 other conservation rangers, were left without this vital financial subsidy during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Black Mamba Alliance was born in 31 March 2022, to cover the deficit and ensure that the rangers that patrol these vital protected areas, would retain their jobs and continue with their critical work.

Most of the alliance members have been long-standing supporters and funders of the Black Mambas and Bush Babies programs, as they recognise the benefits of the far-reaching effects that the community work, critical conservation education, wildlife protection, anti-poaching and women-empowerment has brought to building a resilient protected areas network.

We are happy and extremely privileged to welcome the following partners who have formed the Black Mamba Alliance:

+ Sponsors who wish to stay anonymous.

United Against Poaching

https://transfrontierafrica.org/black-mambas-alliance
November was marked by a truly historical event in the Black Mambas lives. Our Sergeant Nkateko Mzimba went to Panama City on her own to represent Transfrontier Africa, The Black Mambas and The Global March for Elephants and Rhinos-Youth as an advisor on Indigenous Women at the CITES CoP 19 conference on biodiversity.

Nkateko and other members of delegation took part in a beautifully organized opening event called "Wildlife Celebration" where Nkateko sang with children and helped them spread the core message that nature should be valued over money.

We became seriously concerned when we heard that some CITES member states decided to make proposals that contradict ethical handling of wild animals and could destroy the impact of years of conservation globally. Some of those proposals were related to live capture and trade of elephants and legalizing of the rhino horn trade.

The Black Mambas devoted a decade to Rhino protection and protection of elephants, lions and other animals.

During one of the plenary session Nkateko delivered a powerful message against live capturing and trade of elephants in Africa, composed by Iris Ho, Rosemary Alles with Nkateko's input.

Nkateko also presented The Black Mambas project and spoke about how being an anti-poaching ranger has transformed her life.

We are thanking Global March for Elephants and Rhinos for sponsoring this trip.
Four Mambas were selected as Pangolin Guardians to assist our Pangolin Specialist Glen Thompson in sting operations, rehabilitation, release and monitoring of pangolins in remote undisclosed locations. Pangolins are currently said to be the most trafficked animal on the planet.

The initiative is a collaborative effort between Limpopo Endangered Species Unit, Umoya Khulula Wildlife Centre, Provet Animal Hospital, Transfrontier Africa and Rettet Das Nashorn, who sponsors our animal rescue operations.

Now The Black Mambas are well equipped for the 2023 year thanks to Game Rangers Association of Southern Africa and Jim Green Footwear. Could not be more grateful to your teams since good quality boots are an essential tool in a ranger's toolbox!

The boots are the prize the BM won for being in the top 3 winners in the Ranger Quiz during the Wildlife Ranger Challenge 2022.

We are very grateful.

A New Ops Room Laptop From Helping Rhinos Netherlands

An absolute game changer, this generous gift from Helping Rhinos Netherlands (Marlose and Mark Hazelhoff and all the caring donors) was donated to the BMs in early November to replace our 10 year old laptop, when Marlose, Mark, Simon and his wife Anita visited our Indlovu Bush Camp.

Thank you for your generosity!

Supervisor Leitah Mkhabela and Sergeant Tsakane Nxumalo are using the new laptop to track their teams.
The Black Mambas

Promoted over Christmas

In November we had a privilege of welcoming Prof. Adam Hart and Prof. Anne Goodenough from the University of Gloucestershire to our headquarters. As ecologists, they both have been teaching and doing research in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana for more than a decade. This included work on poachers detection and testing the use of thermal imaging cameras in this context.

On the 13th of December we had our traditional Christmas Parade. After the parade we promoted Tsakane Nxumalo and Naledi Malungane to Sergeants and leaders of the new Crime Prevention Unit. The CPU team was given their new badges as well to differentiate them from other Black Mambas teams. The CPU team’s training and salaries are generously sponsored by Helping Rhinos and Der Touristik Foundation.

Thermal Imaging Technology to Aid Mambas Anti-Poaching Work

The thermals are hand thermals, which means they can be easily transported in the rangers pocket, yet do good work. Special thanks to Prof. Adam Hart and Prof. Anne Goodenough.

The CPU badge was designed by Jay Spencer and was chosen by The Mambas among other options offered.
Bush Babies Have Graduated!

The Bush Babies successfully graduated from the Program. The graduation ceremony gathered more than 400 people including more than 130 students-graduates. The kids received their certificates and medals, and the Black Mambas and Soldiers for Wildlife congratulated the graduates and gave inspirational speech to welcome them to the new stage of their student lives.

The kids also cooked eggs in the hot sand, and learned about fruit and vegetables by drawing them. During one of the Scouts sessions, the cubs places Scouts laws and promised in order, and drew South African national flower and a national bird.

At the Bush Babies Centre

Life at the centre was busy! The kids and the Educators planted some new vegetables to harvest them later.

The Bush Babies also saved a little bird chick that fell from the tree. Currently *Rewild* team is looking after the baby.

South African National Symbols

- **KING PROTEA** - National Flower
- **YELLOW WOOD** - National Tree
- **SPRINGBOK** - National Animal
- **BLUE CRANE** - National Bird
- **BLACK BREAM** - National Fish
The Bush Babies vehicle serves its best purpose thanks to its generous sponsors.

Exciting Bush Camp

This year our Annual Bush camp was a super success! We moved the camp to the river bank as the rainy season started and the riverbed has become beautifully flooded but not usable during the rainy season.

The new place is very cozy and the vibe at camp is great! The kids (and the Educators) enjoyed a lot of activities together: tree walk with The Black Mambas Vongani and Naledi, game drives with Andy where they saw a herd of Elephants, campfire songs and games, star gazing, obstacle course where kids had a good workout and a lot of fun, animal tracks with Lewyn.

One of the Bush Babies favourite activity is Treasure Hunt. The kids had to navigate the map to find cards with letters hidden in the bush to make words. So what words did they make?

At Christmas Parade

At The Black Mambas Christmas Parade Lewyn officially introduced her new team to The Black Mambas rangers and Transfrontier Africa staff. The Black Mambas APU and The Bush Babies Environmental Education Program are sister projects. Both teams collaborate on preventing poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade from happening, tackling this issue holistically.

We are thanking The Black Mambas Alliance for supporting our teams. It is thanks to you we all could continue making a positive impact on the environment and people of South Africa.
Interns Presentations

This month we had a busy intern presentation evening with 5 of our own interns presenting their work and 2 guest students presenting research they are doing on the impact elephant have on trees in the whole of the APNR. A great evening, with the level of presentations ever climbing. After all the presentations all the students evaluate each other’s presentations which helps the learning process as well as developing critical thinking and giving effective feedback.

Amy Dennet is back to complete her MSc research

Amy Dennet has returned to complete her MSc. Her project aims to quantify the grass consumption of grasshoppers and crickets in our region. This is a topic which is generally overlooked and could have big implications in the calculation of our available biomass for grazers.

The Influence of Powerlines on Bats

Human impacts can be found everywhere, and the protected areas are no exception. One of the main focusses of the research we conduct at Transfrontier Africa is the impact humans have on the ecosystem. There are a number of high voltage powerlines running through the reserve and although research has been done on the impact these have on birds no one has looked at the impact they have on bats.

That’s why we have just started a pilot project to see if there is a difference in space use of bats under the powerlines compared to the open bush. We will be recording the echo locations of bats and identifying these to a species level. This should provide enough data to see if there is a difference, in which case we will look at further research.
Alien Vegetation Updates

Managing alien vegetation is essential not only for the indigenous plants. Once alien plants settle in the ecosystem, they change that ecosystem which will impact a number of animals as well. By removing the alien plants, our volunteers help us restore the local ecosystems.

Tree Damage Evaluation

Volunteers kept on helping our evaluating the damage on trees in the reserve, caused by Elephants stripping off the bark.

INSIGHTS FROM ALIENS

What do alien plants change in the environment?

- Light, solar radiation and temperature levels
- Quality and availability of food, shelter, nest sites, basking sites and perches
- Can alter the frequency of fires, nutrient cycling, water availability and soil erosion.

Observing Elephants From the Hide

There is nothing like making a hide your office in a hot day! Lots of animals, including elephants pass by and for our volunteers it is a great time to see the reaction of elephants to bee pheromones.
Happy Birthdays at Camp

Birthdays in the open bush are fun! A Bush Birthday Throne is topped by morning Happy Birthday breakfast, followed by hard work in the bush, culminating in a cheerful gathering at the local Three Bridges Restaurant! So far, we celebrated at least 5 Birthdays during November and December!

Warm Welcome to Joni Hartman and Tom Tochterman

In November we welcomed Joni Hartman and Tom Tochterman and his wife Julie back to the bush.

Joni is a Living Collections Curator at Kansas City Zoo. Kansas City Zoo has been our partner and supporter for many years. Joni oversees the Kansas City Zoo’s support of the Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Initiative.

It was Joni’s second visit to Transfrontier Africa, where she stayed at our rustic Bush Camp, visited our projects on site and explored the surroundings of beautiful Hoedspruit area.

Tom is one of our directors and also a founder of Rhino Mercy, a non-profit that has been helping us with our operational costs for years, and a Board Chair and Director of the Human/Wildlife conflict for the Rotary Action Group for Endangered Species.

Thank you for your visit, Joni and Tom, and thank you for the donations you brought to The Mambas!
"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.

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