

Newsletter

Summer/Autumn
2008



BROWN HYENA PROJECT UPDATE

I actually feel bad reporting about our Bogenfels darting trips – it just doesn't get better. Hartmut arrived at the beginning of February to spend four sleepless nights trying to dart hyenas. I had been monitoring the area with camera traps since the beginning of January without much success - lots of jackals, but no hyenas. However, we can't give up and waited for two nights at the southern end of Van Reenen Bay for hyenas. We had actually seen a hyena walking away from the seal colony carrying a dead seal pup and on the first evening at the bait just after sunset, Ray walked towards our car, ignoring the bait and walking towards the research station.

That at least gave us hope...for some hours...then it was too quiet...and as usual: nothing happened. Sorry, not nothing - the jackals had a feast. The monitoring of the seal colony during the day revealed nothing and we decided to try our luck further away at Dreimasterbay. Lots of hyena tracks there and we were actually convinced that it would work there. Well, we did not see any hyenas, but saw some spoor the next morning, about 100 metres away from the bait. The hyena must have been spooked by the car and walked off into opposite direction. We spent the day at the Baker's Bay seal colony and saw two hyenas, one of them approaching the seal colony, but, a weird thing happened on this trip: three hyenas that saw the vehicle (they could not smell it and we were not moving) ran away immediately, including the one approaching the seal colony at Baker's Bay. This has never happened before. There is more traffic now in the area due to the mining at Bogenfels, so maybe they had become wary of cars. In future, we will try to dart the hyenas further inland, maybe in the Klinghardt mountains. We are working on improving our equipment too, building a hide amongst other things. Hopefully we will be able to try to fit the Bogenfels collars later this year – we are far away from giving up.



Jackals on the bait at Bodenfels

It's been quite some time since I've been at Sylvia Hill to monitor the brown hyenas in the area. I was really looking forward to my visit in February. I went straight to the den site, which has always been active during my previous visits. Arriving at the den, I could already see that it hadn't been used for a long time. There was no hyena spoor in the area and I started to check all known latrine sites: most of the latrines were gone and the few that I could still find hadn't been used recently. There were also no paste marks in the area. Next task was to check the food sources. There were no fresh tracks going to the bird colonies and nothing to be seen around the seal colony. The hyenas disappeared! What happened. There is plenty of food, so why did they leave. Maybe they were affected by the distemper outbreak a few years ago, but all other hyena populations are fine, so I don't really think that this is a probable explanation. I can only imagine that the female died for some reason and that both males (we assume that the third hyena is a male, too) left the area. The area is so rich in food sources and there are two perfect den sites in the cliffs. Jackal numbers, as competitors, are not larger than anywhere else, so I hope that other hyenas will move into this vacant territory soon. Strangely, Sylvia Hill is not the only coastal site, where hyena numbers have dropped recently. At Van Reenen Bay, hyena numbers dropped, too. However, the seal

numbers at the colony at Van Reenen Bay dropped drastically and I think that this is the cause for the low hyena abundance at the moment. In contrast, the seal colony at Sylvia Hill has been growing over the last four years and this year's pup production is higher than it was four years ago. At Sylvia Hill, we found one dead hyena on the cliff above the seal colony. Unfortunately the skull was gone (possibly removed by tourists) so we can't determine the age of the dead animal. We have planned another trip to Van Reenen Bay for the beginning of next year.

Ingrid Wiesel

DVD DONATION

The African Environmental Film Foundation who specialise in producing environmental education films from their base in Kenya were kind enough to donate two complete sets of their films (12 films in each set).

The first set has now been sent to the Brown Hyena project in Luderitz, Namibia for them to use in their environmental information centre which is located just outside Luderitz in the ghost town of Kolmanskop.



The Brown Hyena Project information centre

PCT IS 5 YEARS OLD

It seems hard to believe that we founded the Predator Conservation Trust 5 years ago - time really does seem to have flown.

In the five years we have been going, we have helped wildlife conservation projects in Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

So far we have made grants totalling over £30,000 (US\$60,000) to six projects.

Painted Dog Conservation:	£7915.55
Caprivi Carnivore project:	£5581.81
Kunene Lion Project:	£8282.00
Brown Hyena Project:	£5689.09
Carnivore atlas Project:	£2700.00
Cheetah Conservation Botswana	£1021.00

These grants have provided a variety of essentials to the various projects - radio collars, dart guns, tranquiliser darts, anaesthetics, a project base camp and aircraft shelter, digital cameras, video equipment, reference books and reports, GPS units, camera traps, a landrover plus spare engine, aerial tracking, vehicle roof rack, basic camping equipment, vehicle parts maintenance and fuel.

The Trustees are extremely pleased to have been able to help these projects with a range of requirements - some big and some small. We would like to thank everyone who has supported PCT and the projects we help fund.

Anthony May

LISE HANSSEN - CAPRIVI CARNIVORE PROJECT UPDATE

Over the past few months, Lise has been busy in the Caprivi. As well as spending a lot of time exploring the area thoroughly to identify all the tracks (which aren't shown on any maps), water-holes, den sites etc, she has spent a lot of time talking to the local community to build up a good working relationship and to keep them fully informed about her work.

Lise was awarded a grant through the WildiZe Foundation in the United States for around US\$16,000 which has been used for the costs of GPS collars and a VHF / UHF receiver. This equipment has now arrived in the Caprivi and as I write, Lise is currently out searching for Hyena's to dart and collar.

Lise has set up a new permanent base camp at Mazambala lodge's campsite which is only two kilometres off the main tar road and just across the bridge from Bwabwata. From here she only has to drive five minutes east to Kongola where IRDNC and Mayuni Conservancy have offices and five minutes west to Susuwe where there is a MET Ranger station.

Extracts from some of her field reports are included here, but space does not permit us to include them all.

Anthony May

I am focusing on conducting a questionnaire survey on human wildlife conflict (HWC) throughout the west Caprivi (Bwabwata) and the Conservancies that fall within the Mudumu North Complex, which are four Conservancies (Mayuni, Mashi, Kwando and Sobbe) on the boundary of Bwabwata on the eastern side of the Kwando River. If time allows I would like to include some of the villages in the Kavango Region that fall between Bwabwata and Mahangu Park on the Okavango River.

Carrying out the survey is by no means a straight forward process. On meeting with Friedrich Alpers (IRDNC) at Buffalo, I received extensive advice on who in the community should be kept informed at all times about my movements in the Caprivi. This includes the police, the military, the conservancies, the Kyaramacan Trust, MET and the NGO's. Much of my time is spent on setting up the survey and PR before venturing out to actually gather the required information.

I have met with the Facilitator and the Secretary of Mayuni Conservancy as well as the Research Co-ordinator of the Mudumu North Complex to introduce the project and get their input on the final version of the questionnaire. I have set up meetings with the Chief Game Guard of Mayuni in order to go through the Event Books for the Conservancy where incidents of HWC have been recorded over the years, with the Co-ordinator of the HACCS project (an insurance scheme for HWC) and with the Kwando Conservancy to present the project to the community.

In order to conduct the HWC survey it is vital to identify the stakeholders and understand the complex system of beneficiaries within the Caprivi Region. Most of my time on this trip has been spent on developing the questionnaire with the input of the relative support bodies and network of partnerships and collaborators on the ground. I have learned an incredible amount on how the conservancy system works, but it has been time very time consuming. The Conservancy system was developed so that people living on state land could receive the benefits from consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife utilization within their area. This would include trophy hunting, tourism through joint



Flooding in the Caprivi after the rains



A village in the Caprivi

ventures and training through research projects. They become stakeholders in income generating projects like lodges, campsites and trophy hunting concessions. Conservancies have defined boundaries and with the assistance of NGO's , develop management plans which include wildlife and forest utilization and long-term monitoring. The Conservancy is then officially gazetted by the Namibian government so it is a legal body. In order to thoroughly represent the individuals within their community, the staffing structure is quite complex. Each has a manager and a secretary who are based at the conservancy office. There are a number of area representatives who liaise between the management and the people. The monitoring process is carried out by the game guards of which the number depends on the size of the conservancy. The game guards are headed by a Chief Ranger and a Field officer.

There is a largely San community living within the west Caprivi which has now been officially declared as the Bwabwata National Park and falls within the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) Trans-Frontier Conservation Area. Because the area is a National Park, the residents are unable to form a conservancy. In order to receive benefits from the utilization of wildlife through the two trophy hunting concessions inside the park boundaries, through trophy fees and meat, they have formed the Kyaramacan Trust, which mostly functions along the same lines as a conservancy.

There are vast areas outside the National Parks which have diverse species of trees and other vegetation that can be utilized by the communities in and around them. Some of the areas fall under the management of the Forestry department in the Ministry of Agriculture and others have been declared as Community Forests and monitored by the Conservancies.

The Mudumu North Complex (MNC), which is where I will be working in the East Caprivi, is the area covering the Bwabwata National Park, Mudumu National Park, Community Forests, National Forests and four conservancies in between. The monitoring of plants and wildlife and the utilization thereof is under joint management between the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and the four conservancies. The MNC has its own personnel structure, which includes a General Co-ordinator, a Research Co-ordinator and a Monitoring Co-ordinator who are chosen from within the surrounding community. These individuals might also fall within the Conservancy Structure.

Wildlife monitoring within this entire area is carried out under the game guard system. Each game guard works within a specific block, which would include villages and surrounding land. The information they collect through the event book system is extremely detailed and impressive. They will cover their entire block through the period of a month where they record incidences of livestock loss to predators, poaching, wildlife deaths, predator observations and spoor, observations of rare and endangered game species, like sable and eland that have been reintroduced to the area by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. With NGO logistical support, they also conduct a bi-annual wildlife census of the parks and conservancy areas for the Caprivi Region.

While developing the questionnaire I have met with the Managers, Secretaries and some of the Head Rangers of the MNC conservancies. I have given presentations to Area Representatives and Game Guards at the Kwando and Mashi Conservancies. I still need to meet with the Field Officer and Head Ranger of the Kyaramacan Trust as well as introduce myself to the Chief of the Mbarakwena people.

The wildlife field work will begin within the Kwando system where there is reasonable to good cell-phone coverage so I have ordered GSM collars for this part of the project. I will also be able to use GSM collars on the Okavango River side of the park. No receiver is required and the locations of the collared hyaenas are automatically via SMS to my cellphone daily. If a collared hyaena goes out of cell phone range, the collar continues to store data using the GPS facility on the collar. These locations will immediately be sent to me via SMS the minute the animal steps into cellphone range again.

I will reconsider the GPS collar system when work has developed to the point that I can move on to the central part of Bwabwata, where there is little to no cellphone network coverage at all. I have ordered a whip antenna which is attached to the vehicle. This will allow me to leave the receiver on scanning mode so that all VHF frequencies can be scanned constantly every time I drive. Collaring is due to start in late July/early August.



Popa falls

On Wednesday 28 May 2008 I drove to Popa Falls community campsite to attend a meeting of the Kyaramacan Trust to update them on my progress and inform them of my future plans. I explained the project outlay in having three main objectives, i.e. spotted hyaena demography, human wildlife conflict and community training and capacity building. The biggest San (Bushman) communities within the park are around Cheto and Omega and this is where a number of problems involving large carnivores, especially wild dogs occur. Unfortunately these people are unable to take action when they lose livestock as they are living inside a protected area so none of these animals may be declared "problem animals". I explained that I would like to investigate in detail occurrences of livestock losses so that we can gain a proper understanding of the conflict and come up with solutions for the long-term. My intentions for capacity building are to train individuals within all the relevant communities of the study to be able to carry out research technician work including collecting samples and use radio telemetry effectively. All training will be done under the guidance and in collaboration with IRDNC and with the communities themselves.

As I have mentioned before, but not explained – I had the formal introduction at the Khuta (Traditional Authority office). I was terribly nervous as it is a whole formal ritualistic thing. The whole meeting introduction to the Nduna's (tribal elders) was set up by a local guy called Luskin who is wonderfully helpful. He instructed me to wear a skirt and to look clean and neat. I didn't pack a skirt so I managed to buy a colourful traditional wraparound that the villagers wear round here. Some of them are a bit loud, but I got my hands on a nice orange one that would go well with my orange T-shirt. Back at camp I paraded my outfit to Jeffrey and Raymond who gave me instructions on how to wrap and tie it properly. They were very enthusiastic about my traditional dress and said that that the Khuta would approve.

For a first timer, a khuta is really intimidating. One has to go on ones hands and knees and clap outside the door with your head bowed. The Nduna's file in and one only speaks when spoken too and this is through a translator. The tribe and language is Mafwe and as I have no previous exposure to it, I had absolutely no idea what was being said. I was politely grilled by the Ndunas on my intentions and I kept an eye on Luskin's body language out of the corner of my eye and copied every move he made. The Chief was not present, but I was asked if I would like to see the Chief. Now that question is not as easy to answer as one thinks. If I said yes, I might sound demanding and out of place and if I said no, I might come across as rude and arrogant so I ended up saying "only if the Chief has time" - How was I to know that this question was part of the whole introductory ritual. The Chief was at the palace at the far side of the yard. Everyone speaks in hushed tones and bows their head non-stop in a submissive way. I thought I would explode from stress and tension. One Nduna came back to confirm that the Chief would like to see me now. I was hoping that he would be too busy so was getting really nervous at this point.

The clapping, kneeling and submissive ritual outside the palace was quite hectic and once in the presence of the Chief, one stays on the floor until he invites you to sit on the furniture. Chief Mayuni is a wonderful man. He is kind and a visionary of note. A real father figure type. I made so many faux pax in that scenario I couldn't begin to tell you. I blush when I recall. I have since, on another occasion in an informal setting, met Chief Mayuni again and I bought him a beautiful tie in Katima Mulilo to go with the suit that he wears to formal functions. He is very good looking so I thought that tie would look spectacular on him and he really loved it. I look forward to my next interaction with him.

My bakkie is taking a hammering of a lifetime and I am averaging one flat tyre per week. Not the end of the world and thank goodness it's a hilux. Toyotas truly are the best. I reckon its got some life left in it yet, which is just as well as one ends up taxiing folks all over the place and loading their thatch grass and reeds that they cut to repair their homes. This is the way of the life here and I am fitting right in. Bliksem is having the time of his life and the challenges and learning curves make him the happiest dog of all time.

Lise Hanssen



Blixem enjoying a run along a flooded Caprivi road

SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING APPEAL WITH WWW.SAFARITALK.NET

At the end of February we launched a fundraising initiative in conjunction with the Safaritalk website to raise money to fund anti-snare collars for the Painted Dog Conservation project in Zimbabwe. The appeal was suggested by Matt Wilkinson who runs Safaritalk after a discussion about poachers use of wire snares and the painful deaths of animals including Painted Dogs that get caught in these snares.

These collars which were designed by Greg Rasmussen working with a radio collar supplier, are fitted with a specially designed aluminium plate which runs along the base of the collar with 3 rows of rivets, 17 in total, protruding from it. If an animal wearing the anti-snare plate is unfortunate to enter a snare, the rivets act as points to break the wire and also prevent the wire cutting into the neck of the animal, raising its chances of survival. Initially fitted to radio collars, they are also now used with plain collars just to increase survival rates in areas where poaching is common.



A collar with anti-snare plate.



This collar is battered and worn from a snare wire, but it did its job and saved the life of the dog that was wearing it.



Jealous, from Painted Dog Conservation fits an anti snare collar

The members of Safaritalk's forums responded quickly and generously and within just 3 days had donated enough to fund the purchase of one anti-snare collar. Within a month the donations had reached enough to fund 3 collars (at a cost of US \$340 each).

We would like to thank Safaritalk and everyone who donated to this fundraising appeal - the collars purchased as a result will help protect Painted Dogs from poachers snares.

Safaritalk have also worked with PCT to carry out interviews with a number of the conservationists that we work with. These include Ingrid Wiesel, Lise Hanssen, and Greg Rasmussen. Interviews with these individuals as well as a number of other conservationists from around the world are on Safaritalk and help raise awareness of the projects and the people that run the projects.



CHEETAH CONSERVATION BOTSWANA UPDATE

Leopard Rehabilitation

On the 7th April 2008, Botshelo, the leopard being rehabilitated by CCB, was fitted with a GPS collar and released with the assistance and support of the Department of Wildlife & National Parks. The cat was transported from Jwaneng into the southern Kalahari Wildlife Management Area of Botswana, after being fitted with a GPS collar.

The information that CCB has so far been able to obtain from the collar has indicated that the leopard, released well away from human settlements and farming areas, has been hunting successfully for over two months and is staying within a 23 X 15km area. Walking approximately 1-4km per day, the cat appears to be

staying in a relatively small area for 2-3 days at a time which may indicate her success in making large kills and returning to a carcass for a few days afterwards before moving on.

If this leopard can survive long term, during which she may encounter other leopards, lions, hyenas and man, then she will also have every chance of breeding. So far, this rehabilitation process has shown that it is possible to successfully raise a young leopard for re-release, to hunt successfully, survive and not live to take livestock or seek out human settlements.



Orapa Teacher Training Workshop

Another in our programme of Teacher Training Workshops took place in Orapa, between the 15th and 18th of May and with the invaluable support once more of Debswana. The event, staged by CCB Education Coordinator Wabotlhe Letubo and assisted by our Community Conservation Officer, Morulaganyi Kokole, was attended by fifty teachers from local schools and the Education Centre of the Debswana Mine served as the venue. Both the General Manager and the Conservation Manager of the mine were especially enthusiastic about the event and are keen to continue the new collaboration with CCB.

Coinciding with the workshop was the construction of a predator playground at the Orapa site. The cheetah park has now been handed over to the mine for completion and when finished, a formal opening, as well as follow-up visits to local schools in the area will take place which is currently scheduled for August.

Ghanzi Show.

CCB attended the annual Ghanzi Agricultural Show at the end of June. The event attracted farmers from the local community as well as those from across the country. The CCB stand attracted particular attention of course, and a great deal of interest in and support for our programmes.

Misidentification of cheetahs and leopards and confusion surrounding the two has been a problem in some rural communities. In conjunction with our "Spot the Difference" campaign particular emphasis was placed upon providing education support and materials to visitors at the show, to help them correctly identify predators in their own local areas. CCB was also approached by many farmers and farm workers at the show, who wanted to learn more about predator friendly farming and to share their own experiences with CCB. We look forward to building on these contacts in the near future.



PAINTED DOG CONSERVATION UPDATE

In December 2007 I wrote about the adventures of Jealous and I on Starvation Island, more specifically our misadventures with boats. As promised in that report we did indeed return to Starvation Island in January to check on the dogs. The lake was pretty rough as usual but with the help of Lake Croc we managed to get across to the island and quickly found the dogs, which seemed to be doing quite well. They looked well fed and we concluded that they must have caught something. I was concerned that National Parks had not been to the island for some time and reiterated the need for regular anti poaching patrols to check for snares. With our planned trip to the USA and Europe coming up it was important to make sure that a series of regular inspection visits was in place. In order to facilitate this I deployed ex National Parks Ecologist, Edward Muchuchuti on the island to represent PDC. I felt confident that the dogs would be well monitored during our extended absence. Back in Hwange the heavy rains were making fieldwork difficult at best and down right miserable most of the time. Jealous was following up on sightings of the dogs and on a number of occasions we were out together hot on their trail only to be thwarted by the heavy rain, which washes the spoor away or flooded roads.

The rain does not stop the other PDC programmes however and the Children's Bush Camp began its fourth year of operation by welcoming the children and parents from Sian-yanga Primary School. Wilton and his team, supported by the irrepressible Foggie are extremely competent and despite a long break over the Christmas holidays, the camp went smoothly. Back in their stride it was quickly followed by visits from Ndangababi, Dingani and Main Camp Schools. The Bush Camp programme is an overwhelming success and we are delighted that the knowledge of the children who have not yet attended the camp is significantly higher than it was four years ago. Indicating that the older children, who have attended the camp in previous years, are clearly imparting the lessons they learnt to their younger brothers and sisters.



As February came to a close, Jealous and I embarked on our "World Tour". So many of you contributed to the success of this trip, welcoming Jealous into your homes and going out of your way to ensure he enjoyed the best possible. He is still talking of course. I was delighted by the way he conducted himself, though expected nothing less of someone who typifies what PDC stands for in terms of commitment, dedication and determination. He is a role model to so many here, who have been eager to hear his stories since he returned. They have laughed at his new waistline and commented that that is how a Zimbabwean should look!!!! I must admit to thinking that most of them seem a little thinner and hungrier, such are the difficulties being experienced right now in Zimbabwe. I am not sure what I will remember most from his trip. His first comment when we left Gatwick airport of "where are all the old cars" or the sight of him catching elephant seals in California or his wonder at seeing so many new animal species while visiting our friends in Holland. Probably I will best remember the warmth of your hospitality.

While we were away Foggie ran the ship, with Wilton, Xmas et al pulling their weight to make sure that PDC does not falter. Of course there are always issues and difficult situations to deal with, which is part of the challenge. We arrived back in Zimbabwe amidst the "election fever", which has of course turned into a real illness, which we only hope the country will one day recover from.



The dogs in Hwange are still difficult for us to find at the moment and Jealous and I will soon be with the dogs on Starvation Island again, delighted by the reports from Edward, of him seeing them hunting successfully.

Edward Muchuchuti spent 18 years at Tashinga, the National Parks base adjacent to Starvation Island, before he retired in 2006. With Jealous and I embarking on our “world tour”, I knew that Edward was the man I wanted to keep an eye on the dogs on Starvation Island, know one knows the area better than he does, so I felt confident that I had left that critical aspect of the project in good hands. He didn't disappoint me. Visiting the island each week with a couple of National Park scouts to check on the welfare of the dogs, observe their behaviour and check the island for snares that may or may not have been set by local fisherman. Edward kept meticulous notes; a good habit learnt during his years with National Parks making it relatively easy for me to determine what was taking place during our absence.

He phoned me the day Jealous and I got back from our travels, eager to share the news that he had just seen the dogs hunting successfully. We were happy with the progress being made and talked enthusiastically about the forthcoming denning season, which is always our favourite time of the year.

Edwards next phone call, two weeks later, caused me to drop into my chair as if I had been punched in the stomach. Two dogs were missing. He had been on the island as usual, however due to National Parks deployment schedules he had been unable to stay. During the brief visit he had only seen three dogs and was making plans to get back on the island as soon as he could. I stressed the urgency of this and frustrated by the common sense advice to restrict ones own travel during the tense election period, I sat and waited. Edward phoned again four days later. There were only three dogs. Alpha male Ulaka and alpha female Notch, were missing. Edward had seen the three surviving dogs hunting a waterbuck only to lose it to a huge crocodile. The level of the lake was higher than it had been for some years and there were many crocodiles occupying the small bays on Starvation Island. They followed the dogs as they hunted and Edward was convinced that crocodiles had accounted for the missing dogs.

I didn't doubt him. However I wanted to be sure, so sent Jealous to investigate further, while I drove to Harare and then to Kariba to organise a boat, unconcerned now about the advice against travelling. I discussed the situation with Greg, as I found it hard to believe that crocodiles would catch two of the dogs. However the other scenarios of the two having swum off the island or having denned early did not make sense either.

I met up with Jealous and Edward on the island. Jealous confirmed that there were only three dogs and that the crocodiles were a menace. He smiled as I insisted that we search the island one more time. He has worked with me for many years and knows that I am possessed with the same determination as Greg and won't give up until I absolutely have to. In temperatures of over 40 degrees, we searched the island for any sign of the missing dogs. There was nothing. We then searched around the island on the boat, listening for the signal from Ulaka's collar. Still nothing. It was time to report to National Parks so I instructed the boat captain to get us across to Tashinga and asked Jealous to continue to listen out for Ulaka's collar. Half way across the lake, some 2km from Starvation Island, Jealous picked up the signal !! Though we circled around and around, we failed to detect the signal again. We were mystified. Had Ulaka swum of the island and drowned? Did crocodiles swim so far from the shoreline? Maybe poachers had killed the dogs and thrown the collars in the middle of the lake? So many questions. I needed more help to solve this and so called for a helicopter, knowing that I would definitely pick up the signal from the air. A helicopter is not cheap to hire and we don't exactly have a budget for such things, however I needed answers.

The helicopter arrived two days later and we flew over the island, increasing the circumference of our search ever more. We flew up and down the mainland, checking the areas that I thought the dogs would end up at if they had swum. We flew over the area where Jealous had picked up the signal two days earlier. Nothing. I instructed the pilot to get us back to the island and as we flew in to land I picked up the signal. We circled the spot, hovering low over the water and only saw crocodiles. We landed and walked down to the bay, which was the same one where Edward had witnessed the crocodiles stealing the dogs kill some weeks before. There was no sign of the crocodiles, presumably



scared away by the helicopter. There was no signal either! I got in a small boat and paddled around the bay, searching for the signal from the collar. Jealous can't swim and doesn't like the combination of small boats and big crocodiles, thus he stayed on dry land watching as I searched, perched perilously on the bow of the small rowing boat. I could not pick up the signal again and so concluded that the collar must be inside the crocodile, forcing me to accept that Ulaka was dead. The collar on alpha female Notch, had stopped working some time ago and so her fate remains a mystery, though she probably met the same fate as her mate, Ulaka.

Being the alpha pair, they had perhaps, unwisely, tried to defend their kill from a crocodile and met what must have been a very violent and unpleasant end.

I now had to turn my attention onto the three survivors and consider if it was wise to leave them on the island. Edward had seen them make a kill, however I again wanted to see for my self that they could cope. Days went by with failed hunts until we finally saw them catch a young waterbuck. The crocodiles were close at hand, however this time the dogs fed well. After they had finished eating I dragged the remains up into the tree line, well away from the waiting crocodiles.

I did not want to remove the dogs from the island. I reasoned that we would not catch the survivors if lions had killed two of the pack and added to this was the likelihood that the female, Arrow, was probably pregnant. Immobilising her would almost certainly kill the unborn pups. So the three survivors remain on the island and we have stepped up the monitoring, with the help of the ever-willing staff at Tashinga. I have been back to the island again and the three continue to do well, though the lake also continues to rise.

Peter Blinston

PCT GRANT - MARCH 2008 - PCT FUNDS PURCHASE OF GPS UNITS AND CAMERA TRAPS

In March 2008, the Trustees of the Predator Conservation Trust approved a grant to Painted Dog Conservation in two parts.

The first was for the purchase of eight remote camera traps. These can be placed and left alone. An infra-red beam is broken by any animals that pass through it and this triggers the camera to take a digital photograph. Some of the units will be used at suspected Painted Dog den sites to monitor them for any activity without disturbing the dogs that may be using them, and others will be used to develop fieldwork protocols for planned work in Cameroon.

The second is for the purchase of four GPS units which are designed to integrate with Google Earth (Super Tracksticks). These provide a continuously updated record of the exact route, stop times, speed and direction and other valuable information. The Super Trackstick even has its own built in temperature recorder to monitor and record its environment. These units can be used when doing survey work (e.g. population counts where transects need to be recorded accurately). They will also be used by the anti poaching units and will provide a detailed map of the areas covered by the teams and will be a great help in maximising the efficiency of the teams and planning where to deploy them.

PCT ACCOUNTS: 2007-2008

Our latest financial year ended on 30th June 2008.

During the financial year, our income including all donations, limited funds donations, and gift aid rec-lamations was **£9751.14**

During the year we made several grants, and these are summarised below

Brown Hyena project	£1059.42
Lise Hanssen's Caprivi Carnivore Project	£4549.81
Cheetah Conservation Botswana	£62.92
Painted Dog Project	£1510

Our accounts have been filed as usual with the Charity Commission.

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