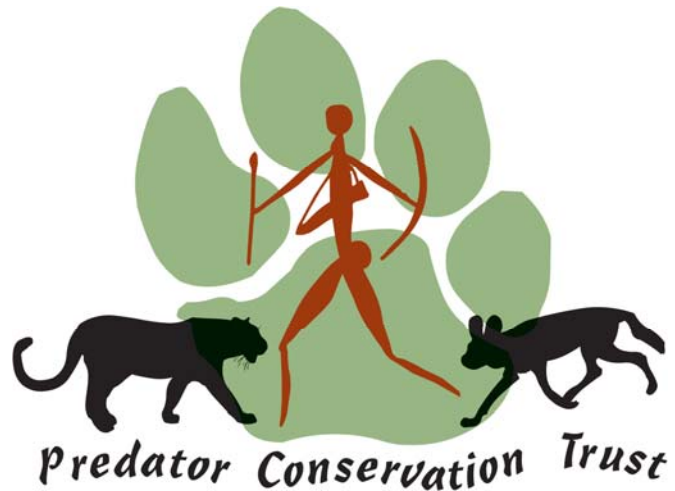


Newsletter

Winter 2008 /
Spring 2009



2008 has been another busy year for PCT with several grants being made to Lise Hanssen's Caprivi carnivore project, Cheetah Conservation Botswana and Ingrid Wiesel's Brown Hyena Research Project.

We are pleased that, thanks to your generous donations, we have been able to support a number of deserving projects on a steady basis over the course of several years, and we hope to support them for many years to come.

We are very pleased to be able to kick off 2009 with a very special auction to raise funds. The owner of Zulu Nyala in South Africa has made a very generous donation of two holidays at one of the Zulu Nyala lodges or camps (see enclosed flyer or our website for more details). These holidays are truly special, combining luxury accommodation and food with superb game viewing.

The Trustees also expect to make the first grant of the year in the next couple of weeks. As always the details will be added to our website as soon as the grant is made, and will be reported in our next newsletter.

If anyone who receives a printed copy of the newsletter is able to switch to receiving it via email instead, this would help us reduce costs for the sponsors who cover the costs of printing and postage, and will also help us get the newsletter issued more quickly. Email newsletters also have the benefit of being in colour. If you are able to make the switch, please contact us (contact details are at the bottom of the last page).

In September I was lucky enough to spend two weeks helping Lise Hanssen with her project to see first hand some of the challenges she faces, and get involved in the less glamorous side of the project. In the course of two weeks I had the "pleasure" of sleeping a few metres away from a box of rotting meat and blood (which was being allowed to rot down to make a foul smelling liquid for making scent trails); I got to strip the flesh from a hyena head removed from a rotting carcass and clean up the skull underneath; and I helped to hang rotting maggot covered meat in a tree to act as bait to dart Hyenas - getting covered in blood and maggots in the process.

These are some of the things that can happen in conservation projects but which are rarely written about. I also saw the problems being caused to carnivore conservation projects by a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak in the West Caprivi. In an effort to stop the spread there is a ban on movement of meat and livestock in the Caprivi which means baiting in the project study area is difficult. The only option proved to be to buy very expensive beef that was certified FMD free and then get it sealed and a special permit issued, or get meat from a species that isn't affected by FMD (which only attacks cloven hoof species such as sheep, goats, cattle, buffalo, antelopes etc), and again it had to be sealed and a permit issued.

Lise's basecamp (and home for most of the year) is in a beautiful location - on the very edge of the Kwando river floodplain with views across it. The flood levels are quite high at the moment so the flood plain is flooded and a shallow channel runs past the edge of the camp. In terms of facilities at the camp, then that's easy to describe - there are none. The camp is at a campsite which is still in the early stages of being developed and which as yet has no toilets or water supplies. Toilets at the moment consist of the "dig a hole" type. Drinking water has to be brought in from elsewhere, but water from the river channel serves for washing clothes and dishes. Lise certainly doesn't live in luxury!

Anthony May

PCT MAKE GRANT TO BROWN HYENA RESEARCH PROJECT

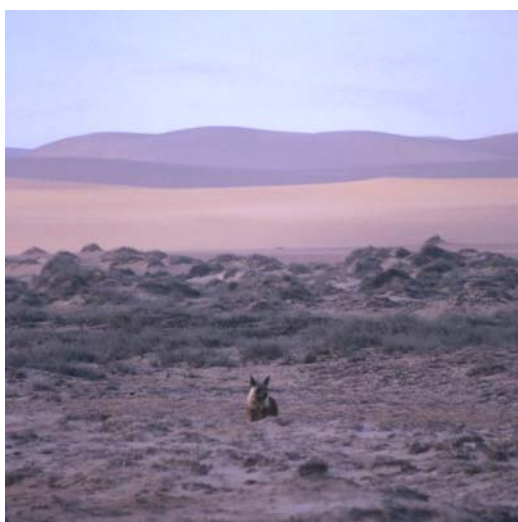
In October the Trustees of The Predator Conservation Trust were pleased to be able to give a grant of £1000 to the Brown Hyena Research Project.

The Brown Hyena Research Project has been collaring brown and spotted hyenas with GPS collars since 2004. Initially, they only used store-on-board collars, where they could only retrieve the data once the collar had dropped off. In 2006 they started to use remote download collars, where they could trigger a data transfer and download data via VHF signal to a receiver. The advantage of such a remote download were among others that data was retrieved on a regular basis and that mitigation strategies could be implemented in good time, especially in areas with human-wildlife conflict situations. Furthermore, collar failure or loss of collar performance could be detected before collar retrieval.

Since then, new GPS technologies have been developed and improved. A new method of remote data download via UHF signal became available one year ago. Televilt, the Swedish company, where the Brown Hyena Project purchases their collars has offered to equip their new order of collars with both download options free of charge.

Because the new UHF collars require a different receiver to download the data, the Trustees of The Predator Conservation Trust agreed to provide a grant of £1000 which will cover most if not all of the costs of the UHF remote download receiver (subject to exchange rate fluctuations).

The UHF download system is far faster than the current VHF system - taking around 2 minutes to download 1000 GPS positions from the collar whereas the VHF system takes around 40 minutes. Additionally the receiver storage limits have been removed by using the UHF system connected to a laptop, which means more downloads can be done in a single trip. These benefits will mean that less flying time is required which will help reduce project running costs.



A brown hyena in the Sperrgebiet

PCT HANDLE UK DONATIONS FOR CHEETAH CONSERVATION BOTSWANA

The Predator Conservation Trust (PCT) are now the official UK partners of Cheetah Conservation Botswana (CCB) for the purposes of handling donations. PCT have agreed to handle all UK donations for CCB, free of charge which will help increase the amount of money reaching Cheetah Conservation Botswana. The arrangement also allows Cheetah Conservation Botswana to benefit from gift-aid on donations made by UK tax payers. The Trustees of the Predator Conservation Trust are pleased to be able to help support Cheetah Conservation Botswana in this way.

We have also been working with Cheetah Conservation Botswana to make their literature more widely available. To this end, electronic versions of most of the CCB publications are now available on the PCT website. This includes some excellent brochures aimed at helping farmers protect their livestock from predators.

PCT MAKE GRANT TO CAPRIVI CARNIVORE PROJECT

In September 2008, following two generous limited funds donations, the Trustees of The Predator Conservation Trust were pleased to be able to make a grant of £550 to Lise Hanssen's Caprivi Carnivore Project. The funds were to contribute towards general running costs of the project such as fuel - particularly useful given the recent price rises on fuel.

Additionally in September, PCT Trustee Anthony May delivered a number of items to Lise Hanssen for her project, including reference books, a video camera and more.

PAINTED DOG PROJECT UPDATE - OCTOBER 2008

I glanced out of the window as the plane came into land. The sky was filled with ominously dark thunderclouds and the impending storm seemed symbolic of what lay ahead for me. I was back in Zimbabwe after a seasonal fundraising trip to the UK and USA with Greg, meeting many of our old friends and making some new ones. Talk of the global economic crisis was on everyone's lips. Equally concerned as I was about this situation, I could not help but smile as I thought of the 200 million percent inflation in Zimbabwe and an exchange rate that had gone off the scale as the value of the Zimbabwean dollar continued its free fall into oblivion. Shops and other industries in Zimbabwe had started or were in the process of trading in United States dollars. There were going to be many new challenges ahead to keep PDC moving forward.

Thankfully the news of the dogs was brighter than the foreboding sky. Jealous had been very busy. He was delighted to present me with the news of frequent sightings of 8 packs in our immediate area, confirming our best guesses that the territories that we know of are in fact occupied. The sightings also confirmed something that is causing us more and more concern. The pack sizes are small, below what Greg's research tells us is a "viable pack size". The eight packs only total 24 adult dogs, an average pack size of 3. Two of the packs have pups, 3 in one litter and 7 in the other. We are earnestly looking for explanations as to why the pack sizes are small (the average pack size in 1997 / 98 was 6). Jealous is of course hot on their trail or should I say tail!

Before I had left for the UK and USA I had visited Chipangali, a wildlife orphanage near Bulawayo. In 2004 they had agreed to give us 4 out of the 7 painted dogs that they held. We released these 4 onto Starvation Island in 2005 and after a successful six-month stay on the island; we re-captured them and released them onto the mainland. So, my mission was to now get the other 3. Kevin Wilson and his wife, Nicky, run Chipangali. I met with them at the orphanage and soon realised how they were struggling to feed the animals due to the chronic economic environment in Zimbabwe. They operate with the best interest of their animals at the forefront of their minds and happily agreed that I should collect the three dogs on my return from the USA. What I soon realised was that the three I "knew" to be at Chipangali had tragically died and that the three they had were in fact the off spring, born in June 2007, of the original ones. In away this was better, as younger dogs are easier to integrate into a pack, which was my aim.

Kevin and his wife could not have been more helpful and the translocation went smoothly. It was our aim to move the dogs without the stress of anaesthetising them and this was accomplished with ease. Chipangali was constructed with much thought and it was easy to persuade the dogs to move from their large enclosure into a connecting raceway. It was then just as easy to get them into a large cage, used for transporting cheetah, and from that into our purpose built trailer for the journey to Hwange. Our resident dogs, John and Angela gave them a noisy welcome but all soon settled down and we all ready have them on a fence line with the three males that I hope to introduce them to, making a viable pack of 6, which will be the next candidates for Starvation Island sometime in 2009.

Peter Blinston



PAINTED DOG PROJECT UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2008

I often get asked what it is like to be living in Zimbabwe right now. To be honest, that's hard to answer without a lot of expletives, however I will try to illustrate some of the points, in a polite way. To me a perfect example of the difficulties we face is illustrated by our payroll, which for the month of November 2008 was just over 6 quintillion dollars. That's 6 plus 18 zeros. Actually the true figure / value of the dollar would be 6 plus 21 zeros and I am not sure what that figure is called. The authorities here knocked 13 zeros of the currency to make it more manageable because of most accounting systems failing to cope with so many zeros. I calculated that it would take our lowest paid member of staff over 200 million years to withdraw their month's pay, given the daily cash withdrawal limits currently in place. Hard to get your head around isn't it !!

Then there is food, or the lack of it. So I now spend time in Harare sourcing basic commodities for our staff from suppliers who import from South Africa. Staff now get paid with a "food pack" in addition to their zeros. My Assistant Manager, Fergie, completes the food pack and the stocks for our Children's Bush Camp and APU by spending on average 8 days a month in Botswana shopping. She voluntarily sleeps in the back of the landrover during these trips to save money. We have been importing fuel and vehicle spares for several years already and we are now resigned to importing just about everything. The phone systems are chronic, thus exacerbating the situation and increasing the time spent trying to source or order anything.

I suppose we could be forgiven for taking our "eye of the ball" under the circumstances, however we don't. Anyone who visits PDC will witness for themselves the absolute dedication and tireless work of our staff. It's a humbling experience. Most if not all of our staff are their families' breadwinner, extended families, not just their own immediate families. The pressure on them is huge, on a daily basis we hear of someone who has died of starvation. As breadwinners they often go without food themselves so that their family members can eat.

Jealous of course is a perfect example and role model. He is the head of his family, his father died recently of TB, which went untreated, as there was no treatment available at any of the neighbouring hospitals. He is the primary breadwinner and apart from his own immediate family of 4, he has responsibility towards another 12 or so people. Happily his new grinding mill is now operational, which will help him financially, however regardless of that he works tirelessly tracking the dogs for us, with a broad smile never far from his face.

The dog news remains encouraging, in terms of the territories that we know of, being occupied by dogs. As reported last month however, these packs are small, which in itself is cause for concern. We have been out early every morning searching for these elusive packs and a recent opportunity for darting and collaring one of the packs was frustrated by, of all things, tourists. Frustratingly, some of the few tourists that visit Hwange NP these days happened to drive by at the ideal darting moment and scared the dogs away into the bush !!!

sightings of the various packs continue to come in, so it is just a matter of time before we get another opportunity. We are anxious to deploy our two GPS collars, which will hopefully give us even greater information regarding the packs movement. Our recent arrivals from Chipangali are doing very well and the process of integrating them with the other dogs we have is going well.

Peter Blinston



CAPRIVI CARNIVORE PROJECT UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2008

Hyaena scat samples that had been collected previously from various locations including the latrine behind the military base were examined in order to identify choice of prey species. There is often very little evidence inside hyaena scat because their digestive systems are so powerful that even the organic part of bones is absorbed leaving only the inorganic part to be excreted. That is why hyaena scat is white and powdery almost like chalk. What was discovered was fascinating and included red, white and black hairs from impalas, tan hairs from kudus, wiry black hairs from warthogs, matted soft hair from scrub hares, a single yellow chick feather, lots of small bone fragments, one tooth fragment, one horn fragment, insect pupa casings, beetle exoskeletons, hoof fragments, two baboon finger nails and what looked like the broken brown glass from beer bottles of which there are many in the old dump site. The contents have been properly sorted, stored and labelled for a more thorough analysis at a later date.



Lise checking the scat samples

After the hide had been in place for 3 days, the chunk of meat was chopped in half. One half stayed in a flour sack at camp to rot, while the other piece was transported across the checkpoint to the park. It was firmly strapped up and hoisted into the same tree that the elephant meat had been hung. I was interested to know the reaction that any visitors would have to the tent that is clearly visible from the tree, but the next morning there were quite a few spoor of hyaena in the sand nearby. None had approached the tree, but it seemed that they had stood around for quite some time looking at it.

From a number of sources I had learned that the longer the bait is left, the more hyaenas it would attract. I decided that the bait should hang for another three nights and then the hide could be tried out. While I waited this out, the bait was checked daily for activity, but it seemed that interest in the bait was waning despite putting a lot of effort into reinforcing scent trails on a daily basis. After the third night of declining interest in the bait, I decided to make a massive effort with scent trails from the reeking bale of rotten meat and water brewing back at camp and then spend the first night in the hide. As the hide's objective is to be able to dart successfully, little thought was put into whether it was ideally situated for sleeping in when initially erected so was not tested out for hillocks and other lumps under the ground sheet. These have now become apparent after spending a couple of nights sleeping jammed between the rifle and equipment cases.

As the park carnivores are very skittish I have not wanted to use a spot light or torch from the hide. Unfortunately this leaves me with a small window which falls between sunset and dawn and sunrise the following morning in which I hope they will pay a visit to the bait as it is light enough to see. The first evening was very quiet and there were no sounds during the night. In the morning, only one set of hyaena tracks were found with difficulty. It seemed that it had strolled past at a distance and not even stopped to get a closer look.

I decided that it was time to use the rotting piece of meat tied up in a bag at camp. I would drag it and then reinforce this trail with scent made from the mixture of meat and water that had been lying in the sun for three days. Nothing appeared before dark, but around 23.30 there was a loud crunching of bone at the bait tree. Later on the evening the bone crunching resumed and there was also quite a bit of noise from an elephant very close by. At first light in the morning there was a growl from a leopard only a few metres away from the hide and then silence as the sun came up. Spoor revealed that there were at least three hyaenas and a leopard at the bait. One set of hyaena tracks came very close to the tent. The bait was dragged the extent of the rope length away from the tree and had been half eaten, bones, maggots and all. I was surprised that 3 feeding hyaenas had made so little sound. Most of the noise had been made by the elephant whose spoor had followed the scent trail all the way to the bait tree. Its possible that it had made an attempt at chasing the carnivores away leaving the meat only half finished.

As the hyaenas are visiting so late and the moon has been rising only in the early hours of the morning, there is no choice, but to use artificial light for darting. A double thick red filter has been put on the Maglite.

Lise Hanssen

CAPRIVI CARNIVORE PROJECT UPDATE - DECEMBER 2008

Since the last update, I have been actively baiting and laying scent trails over great distances, which were "refreshed" on a daily basis. I have kept thorough records of the baiting and scent trail process and a general pattern has emerged. Contrary to information I have received regarding large numbers of hyaenas attracted to bait over time, I have found, with the exception of one occasion, only three or four sets of hyaena spoor at the bait over a period of three or four days. The bait quickly attracts leopard which will visit nightly until the bait disintegrates. I suspect that my presence in the hide has much to do with my lack of success as hyaenas are notoriously suspicious of people especially in areas where they have been persecuted. Data from the event books appears to back this up as the presence of hyaenas has been noted through sightings of spoor only, with the exception of a couple of actual visuals. Results from the dry season game count data from WWF for the Caprivi region show the same thing with actual sightings of hyaenas counted at less than 10 individuals.

With the onset of the rainy season, baiting has become difficult as rain washes away the scent trails and I am even more dependant on hyaenas that know that the bait is there, rather than attracting individuals that happen to pick up the scent trails. Essentially the baiting process has been one of chance even if I have improved the odds by increasing the distance of the scent trails. As a result I have looked into various methods used in southern Africa for the capture of spotted hyaenas and have had a lot of feedback from people working in areas such as Kruger National Park, Etosha National Park and the Kalahari.



I also investigated the use of Dormicum which is a powerful sedative often used as a premed in human surgery and which works very well in felines where they are wary of people. Although I have heard mixed reports regarding hyaenas and dormicum, including that it can excite them rather than sedate them, I also received some excellent information from Gus Van Dyk, who I worked with in the 90's during a cheetah reintroduction into Madikwe Game Reserve. He had tremendous success with Dormicum while capturing spotted hyaenas in Etosha for Madikwe and even managed to sedate 12 individuals at one bait site.

Dr Paul Funston from Kruger kindly provided me with the specs for a sound system in order to project sounds of animals in distress over distances exceeding 7 km.

The rough field work and possibly the wet conditions have been extremely hard on my vehicle. One morning while making my way back to camp after a night in the hide, the fuel injection system packed up leaving me stranded in the park out of cell phone range about 20 km west of Kongola. After walking along the main tar road, I managed to get a weak signal and was rescued by Andre Schroeder from the Engen Station at Kongola. I was towed to Katima by Dan Stephens where the fuel injection system was bypassed temporarily so that my car would at least start.

I decided that it was time to make a trip to Windhoek to get my vehicle fixed up, get a prescription for Dormicum from Dr. Mark Jago from MET and to buy a sound system for call ups.

While in Windhoek I also visited the WWF headoffice and was kindly offered a trip camera for the hyaena work in Caprivi. Vincent Guillaume from the French Embassy instructed me on the correct use of the camera. My vehicle was serviced and repaired and I managed to put together a state of the art sound system which includes, an MP3 player, two 60 W horn speakers, 20 metres of cables, a 120 W amplifier and two dry cell 12 V batteries. The entire system cost approximately N\$7000, but in addition to baiting I will use it for call stations during the dry season, which will be repeated annually for the next three years in order to monitor the spotted hyaena population throughout the Caprivi.

I have been contacted by film producers in the UK to make a documentary on the hyaenas for Discovery Channel. I will be departing on the 15 December for Omaruru to meet up with a crew to discuss filming the promo for Discovery. Thereafter I will be driving back to the Caprivi where I will attempt to improve the hyaena response using sound.

Lise Hanssen

BROWN HYENA PROJECT UPDATE

BOGENFELS:

Now that Ray was dead, it was even more important to collar another hyena at Bogenfels. We also invested a bit to improve our methods and it was the first time that we wanted to try to dart from a hide. When I bought the hide, it actually looked big enough to have two people in there comfortably, but well, it turned out to be rather small. It is difficult to explain how uncomfortable it is, but I will give it a try. First we obviously have to have all necessary equipment inside the hide (storing it outside would just attract more cheeky jackals). The nights in winter are long and Amanda and I have to spend 12 hours inside the hide. We change shifts every two hours and one person can somehow lie in the back of the hide. Stretching legs is not possible, so one "sleeps" in the foetus position most of the time. Then we change for shifts and the person on watch sits on a very uncomfortable camping chair (well, if used for camping it is comfortable, but sitting on it for hours on end, pushes the limits).



The hide in position ready to dart Hyenas

To make things even more difficult, the jackals decided to not only eat our bait, as they always do, but also to destroy our alarm system that serves as a back-up in case the person on watch falls asleep. However, falling asleep during the watches was rather difficult, not only because of the camping chair issue, but also because the west coast winter this year decided to be one of the worst I ever experienced. Temperatures close to zero, lots of fog and lots of rain! Somehow the rain seems to follow me on my darting trips... But by now, all of you know that we don't give up and just try to make the best out of the situation. We spent three weeks around Bogenfels to try to collar another hyena, but did not even see one this time. However, we can't complain about jackal presence, but that's no news. I really did not expect to have no sightings, not even at the seal colonies. We had no other chance than to leave the site for some time, as we also needed to fit collars on inland hyenas. We decided to go back to Bogenfels once we have collared some hyenas in inland areas of the Sperrgebiet and we will possibly try to attract the coastal hyenas a bit further inland to our bait. The Bogenfels hyenas do occasionally go to the Klinghardt Mountains to the east of the coast and we have already decided on a darting site there.

HYENAS AT SWAKOPMUND

If we can't capture Sperrgebiet brown hyenas and Garub spotted hyenas, why not trying further north? As previously reported, at least two sub-adult brown hyenas were causing problems at the guano platforms north of Swakopmund.

Steve and I drove to Swakopmund at the end of October to try to fit a GSM collar on one of the hyenas with the help of Hartmut and Peter Sander, who had monitored the hyenas for quite some time. He knew of one area that the hyenas frequent often and we set up our bait and waited. First night: nothing, but when we arrived at the bait a bit later the next night, we spotted a brown hyena feeding together with two jackals. We approached the hyena carefully, but the animal managed to grab a piece of bait and disappeared into the darkness. However, later that night, the hyena came back, but once we switched on the spotlight, it did not want to get close, so again, our darting attempt failed. We arrived a bit earlier the next night, also to give Hartmut some time to do some practice shots with his dart gun. Lucky that we did so: Loading the gun, shot and: dart pops out – something was wrong. Again and again we tried, but the darts did not 'fly'. Steve drove back to town to fetch my dart gun, which worked and we relaxed a bit and waited for the hyenas to come to the bait. Unfortunately the hyena did not come back, so that we have to book this trip as another unsuccessful darting attempt – nothing new. However, the good news is that there does not seem to be a problem with brown hyenas visiting the guano platforms at the moment, so that the birds can settle on them again and the hyenas are safe for now.

Ingrid Wiesel

CHEETAH CONSERVATION BOTSWANA UPDATE

The research department has recently been focusing upon the construction and completion of the new camp in Ghanzi. Work commenced in July on land owned by the People and Nature Trust, an NGO that offers life skills training, environmental and agricultural education to young orphans from across Botswana. The camp includes accommodation for six people, an office, veterinary clinic and cheetah holding enclosure. In the future CCB hopes to host teacher training workshops, farmer workshops, a livestock guarding dog demonstration site and education and research programmes at the site.

In addition, monitoring of the cheetah populations around Jwaneng and Ghanzi has continued.

'Kealeboga', the cheetah caught across the border in South Africa is alive and well and has been moving in and out of Botswana. Unfortunately, collar malfunctions have been hindering data collection, but we hope to correct the situation in the New Year.

'Botshelo', the orphaned leopard cub rehabilitated and released in April 2008, continues to thrive. Before release she had been entering 'heat' and had attracted the attentions of a male leopard in Jwaneng. There is now a possibility that since settling into her new territory in a Wildlife Management Area, her path may have crossed the path of a local male so she may now have cubs of her own.

In July 2008, the Department of Wildlife & National Parks brought into our temporary custody nine African wild dog puppies. Rescued by a farmer in Ghanzi, the puppies were thought to be about nine weeks old. They were kept at our Ghanzi research base for about three weeks until long term facilities for their rehabilitation could be found.

They moved to Mokolodi Nature Reserve for disease testing before being transported to a new home at the Limpopo-Limpadi Game Reserve. The latest news is that the young dogs continue to thrive and have settled in to their new home.



In August, Jwaneng became the new operating base for Wabotlhe's Community Education Programme. This has enabled her to be closer to communities directly affected by conflict with local predators. Future plans include a new predator playground in the park at Jwaneng and the development of the further development of the education centre, as well as the possible construction of



model kraals, to aid the local farmers who need to construct their kraals.

Since the last newsletter, school visits have continued as have our successful programme of Teacher Training Workshops. Wabotlhe has been conducting follow-up visits to schools surrounding Tsabong, after the Teacher Training workshop held there earlier this year.

PCT MAKE GRANT TO CHEETAH CONSERVATION BOTSWANA

In December, the Trustees of The Predator Conservation Trust were pleased to be able to make a grant to Cheetah Conservation Botswana.

Cheetah Conservation Botswana (CCB) can not operate successfully without vehicles to enable them to visit schools for educational visits, track cheetah, relocate problem animals, or liaise with the farming community.

Fuel is obviously a significant expense, especially when you consider the distances that have to be covered in a country like Botswana. To this end the grant awarded is for the purchase of fuel for the vehicles to keep CCB on the move.

DVD'S DONATED TO PAINTED DOG CONSERVATION

In 2008 the African Environmental Film Foundation donated two sets of their educational wildlife films on DVD (12 films in a set) to PCT. As reported in the last newsletter, the first set was passed on to the Brown Hyena project for their education and information centre.

The second set of DVDs has now been passed on to Greg Rasmussen for use in the PDC education centre where they will soon be in use entertaining and educating the children who visit.



WEBSITE UPDATE - PCT WEBSITE GETS ITS ONE MILLIONTH VISITOR

Over the Christmas period our website received its one millionth visitor. The site has been steadily growing with more and more content being added every month, and the number of visitors has also been increasing steadily. Over the past few months the site has been regularly updated with newsletters and news updates from the various projects we support. Whereas we have space limitations in the newsletter which prevent us including all the available updates, we are able to include all of them on the website.

The website has also been updated to include some excellent literature produced by Cheetah Conservation Botswana, including booklets aimed at small farmers to give advice on how to protect their livestock from predators, thus reducing losses and conflict.

As well as the website, users of Facebook are able to join the Predator Conservation Trust group to keep up to date with our activities.

PCT - KEEPING DOWN EXPENSES

Since PCT was formed just over five years ago, none of the Trustees have ever been paid for their time or for the expenses they incur in their work for PCT. We have no intention of changing this - we are proud that every penny donated by our supporters goes to conservation projects in the field.

SAFARITALK COLLARS UPDATE

In the last newsletter we reported the successful fundraising appeal carried out with safaritalk.net to raise funds for anti-snare collars for the Painted Dog Project in Zimbabwe.

The original intention was to use the funds raised to purchase three new anti-snare collars, but following discussions with PDC it was agreed that a more effective use of the funds would be to use the money to get some existing radio collars (with the anti-snare plates) refurbished/repaired. PDC had several collars that were in need of repair and refurbishment which were waiting for them to raise the money to get the repairs done.

As a result, donations from Safaritalk members have resulted in 7 collars being repaired/refurbished and made available to protect (and track) the wild dogs.

The first collar was fitted to Mashambo - one of the dogs on Starvation Island (a predator free island used to make sure the dogs can hunt and survive by themselves in the wild prior to a move to full freedom) as the dogs existing collar had failed.

Many thanks to all who contributed.

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