



By R.Groom

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SUMMARY OF THIS QUARTER

It has been an exciting quarter, with 2012 continuing to be a decisive year for AWCF. We have been moving from strength to strength and have made great strides towards achieving our goals for 2012.

This time of year is always a busy one for us - with the denning season in full swing, we are often left trying to burn the candle at both ends with education and outreach work, field work and the dreaded administration work.

This quarter in 2012 has been particularly busy with us having initiated a new field project in a previously unstudied area of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA). We continue to redouble our efforts on the outreach and education front and maintain our focus on the GLTFCA for our conservation work. This quarter we have seen especially encouraging results from our work in the Gonarezhou National Park.

"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children"

– Chief Seattle

AFRICAN WILD DOG EDUCATION AND AWARENESS DAY

On the 3rd August 2012, AWCF held an African wild dog education and awareness day at the Mukuvisi Woodlands Education Centre in Harare. A total of 149 students from 11 schools attended the day aimed at local schools within the Harare area. A lot of work went into preparing for the day including the construction of 'life sized' wild dog models and six enormous posters with facts on the biology and conservation of African wild dogs.

On the day we hosted both primary and secondary schools, rotating the students around a set of stations including the six poster stations and a documentary room. At the end of the day we held a quiz competition and 35 students from the 11 different schools were chosen to go on a three day field trip to Chishakwe Ranch as a prize. There was much excitement among the students about the prize, which provides them the opportunity to see wildlife in-situ and experience conservation efforts first hand. Certificates were then presented to each school who attended the day, along with several fact-booklets to take back to their respective environmental clubs.



After the daytime event, which really was a great success, we also participated in an evening event aimed at the older generation. The evening event consisted of a dinner under the stars, followed by a presentation by AWCF's Dr. Rosemary Groom and Filmmaker Mr. Kim Wolhuter on wild dog conservation in Zimbabwe and an airing of Kim's fantastic documentary 'A dog's life' – a film set on the Malilangwe Wildlife Reserve in Zimbabwe documenting the daily life and struggles of a pack of wild dogs in this pristine

wildlife area. Tickets for the evening event were sold out and the money raised went towards Mukuvisi Woodlands, all in all a fantastic day for conservation awareness in Zimbabwe.



A START OF THINGS TO COME – NEW PROJECTS AND NEW FRONTIERS



This year saw the start of a project looking into the status of wild dogs on one of Zimbabwe's largest privately owned ranches, the Nuanetsi Conservancy. The Nuanetsi Conservancy covers an area of 148 875 hectares and forms a key part of the GLTFCA. It is an important link for wildlife between the southern side of Gonarezhou National Park and the Buby Valley Conservancy and other the private game ranches and concessions of the Tuli area in Southern Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana. The project, although in its infancy, has already showed some encouraging results with us having discovered at least two different packs on the conservancy. We located one den site and managed to get some camera trap pictures of a few individuals and at least two pups. The Nuanetsi Conservancy is 'new territory' in terms of wild dog conservation work and hopefully, work there will help us gain a better understanding of the wild dog population in the GLTFCA as a whole, as well as provide insights into the dispersal of these magnificent animals.

SAVE VALLEY CONSERVANCY – DENNING SEASON REPORT

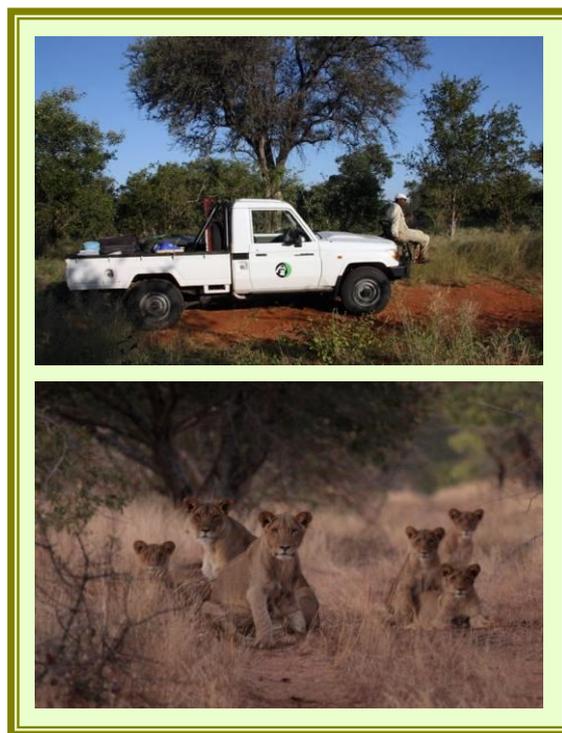
It has been a good quarter for wild dogs in the Savé Valley Conservancy (SVC), with the denning season showing good litter sizes and pup survival. We located the dens for all eight packs, counting a total of 83 pups. This quarter, no pups were lost due to conflict with lions, although our camera traps did capture several lions visiting the wild dog dens. Three of the packs have had two litters, increasing their numbers dramatically.

Since June 2012, we have lost a total of three African wild dogs in SVC of which two were from natural causes. Conflict with humans accounted for one of the deaths; an adult from the Pita Pack that was caught in a snare. Snaring continues to be a massive threat to wild dog conservation efforts in SVC and the surrounding areas but with continued support and the expansion of our activities we hope to mitigate its impacts.



GONAREZHOU PREDATOR PROJECT

- *Annual spoor survey* – During the last quarter we conducted the annual spoor survey of the entire national park. The results of the spoor survey allow us to monitor the trends in the large predator populations in the Park over time. We look forward to the spoor survey each year as it provides us with the opportunity to spend extended periods in some of the more remote corners of the park. This often means some great sightings and often special encounters. This year was no different, we had great sightings of many of the more common animals in the park and found signs of some of the rarer animal species such as the brown hyena.



- *Wild dog denning season GNP* – The denning season in the park this year has indeed been a busy one, with us trying to take advantage of the fact that the dogs are not travelling far and wide. Being confined to the den means that the dogs are relatively easy to find, especially later in the denning season when paths have been worn to the den-site. We spent a total of 49 nights in the field in GNP this denning season and found five wild dog den-sites and eight different packs. We managed to fit collars to four wild dogs from three different packs within the park. These collars will allow us to monitor the movements of each pack as well as monitor their survival. Camera traps were set up at many of the dens, enabling us to get photographs of the dogs and their pups without any disturbance. These photos are extremely valuable in that they allow us to identify individual dogs. The identification of each individual enables us to determine the fate of each dog and learn more about their survival, behaviour and dispersal. All in all, the denning season in GNP has been an exciting one with very encouraging results.



- **PHOTO OF THE QUARTER**

This photo was taken by AWCF's Dr Rosemary Groom at the Batanai Den on Sango Ranch, Savé Valley Conservancy. These inquisitive little siblings stood their ground for a while allowing Rosemary to take this fantastic picture before scuttling back into the safety of their den.



HOW CAN YOU HELP US?

AWCF is a Zimbabwean registered trust organisation (ZW Reg.: 0000476/2012) and a US registered non-profit (FIN: 26-0571535). Our operations are dependent on successfully obtaining conservation grants and donations from the public.

To support our work please go to www.AfricanWildlifeConservationFund.org/donate

Or you can send a cheque made out to African Wildlife Conservation Fund to:

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For more information on our work and how you can help us, email us on:

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