

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Botswana



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ProjectsAbroad

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the July 2014 Botswana Conservation Newsletter!

Over July, the Motswiri family has grown to 25 volunteers from the USA, Canada, England, Italy, Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium and Luxemburg. No one could argue that the camp isn't multi-cultural! This month, volunteers have also witnessed the onset of winter. Free time during the day is spent relaxing under a warm sun, reading, chatting or playing games. In the evening, enjoying a nice cup of tea around the fire is a must before going to bed wrapped up warm in a sleeping bag as temperatures drop to 0°C!

Activities have been focused on human-wildlife conflict with the patrol of different key areas in the reserve and the subsequent removal of 22 snares. The camera traps have given us a lot of interesting pictures, showing animals that we had never seen on our patrols like the African wild cat and other rarities like bush pigs, giraffes, leopards, spotted and brown hyenas, etc. Volunteers have also cleaned lots of litter and loose wire from the main road to create a cleaner and safer area!

The most exciting event in July was an unexpected visit from lions! After hearing them calling nearby for a few nights in a row, we suddenly came across their tracks... Right next to the camp! The lions had been walking alongside the camp, and they visited the closest waterhole while they patrolled the whole area! Then, after a lovely bush dinner for Carol's birthday, two spotted hyenas came to bid us farewell. All in all, it was a perfect night out in the bush!

In this month's edition, read on page 3 what Conservation Manager, Sophie Juget, has to say about what's been happening at the project over the past month. On page 4, we hear from Anina Baer, Nadja Gruler and Lenneke Baelemans about their experiences in the African bush. And finally, there are plenty of photos to share on pages 5 and 6!

Enjoy our month of adventures!

Elsa Stamm
Camp Manager and Social Manager
Projects Abroad Wild at Tuli Conservation Project



PROJECT UPDATES

Camera Traps

Camera traps are used in conservation on numerous projects to help to identify rare, nocturnal, and timid species on the reserve. They are placed in areas where interesting species may be present along with areas that are difficult to access such as paths used by wildlife and waterholes. So far, the rare and rather timid species that we have captured on our cameras are: the African civet, the Cape porcupine, the brown hyena, the spotted hyena, the Cape clawless otter, the honey badger, the large spotted genet, the leopard, the bushpig, and the African wild cat. To date, 46 species of mammals have been identified on the reserve. The cameras are also used to track which species are using the reserve's waterhole and when they are using it. Camera trap photos are also used to identify specific individuals like elephants or leopards. They also help us to have a better idea of their territory and the travel range of the herd or the individual. To see our best camera trap pictures, follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/legodimo/?fref=ts>



Human-Wildlife Conflict

Conflict between humans and wildlife is a big problem in the area and must be taken seriously. There are different kinds of conflict that occur. Some farmers who live in the area need to learn how to live in harmony with wildlife and improve their techniques to protect their livestock. Projects Abroad once helped a farmer to fix a *kraal* (cattle enclosure) where the cows spend the night. The fence was in such bad shape that lions or other predators could easily pass through and kill the cows. By reinforcing the fence, lions were no longer able to cross the fence and subsequently, the cows have not been threatened. Another issue is poaching. Villagers come in the reserve and set up snares to catch animals. Their main targets are small, medium or large sized antelopes like impala, greater kudu, plain zebra or even common eland. However, snares sadly trap all kinds of animals including predators such as leopard, spotted hyenas and lions, as well as antelopes or even elephants. In these cases, the animals can die in a great deal of pain through strangulation, excessive bleeding or dehydration. If they do survive, they still suffer terribly with the pressure of the snare potentially causing the loss of a limb. We found and removed more than 22 snares around the property over the last couple of months.



Rubbish Removal

We really appreciate the work that the volunteers do in collecting rubbish. From the car, they look for garbage on the road and sometimes even compete to see which team will find the most garbage. The rubbish is thrown on the road by motorists who do not have any consideration for nature or their environment. Volunteers are educated on the trouble that garbage can cause for wildlife and the environment, and they have managed to collect 15 bags of rubbish over the last few months. They found glass and plastic bottles, wire, paper, tins etc. Bottles can be dangerous for wildlife. The rubbish is not biodegradable and some can take up to 100 years to decompose. Cigarette butts can take up to a decade to decay while you're looking at a century for chewing gum and over 1000 years for a plastic bottle!



VOLUNTEER STORIES

Searching for snares

This Thursday was a really cool day! We left at 7:30 for “Anti-Poaching”. We went to the border of the reserve and had to spread out. Our main task was to find snares. That was very tricky because they are built out of wire which is very difficult to detect when it is hidden in the bush. More than once I wanted to grab a wire just to realise that it was a plant in fact. After some hours of highest concentration we were pretty exhausted and searched our way back to the car. Back in camp we rested and recovered the whole afternoon. In the evening we went to Mamatumi for a sleep-out. On the way there we saw a giraffe, elephants and some of us saw a bushpig that crossed the road in front of us. During the night we saw hyenas, a bat and a beautiful starry sky!

Anina Baer, 23 years old, 1 month of stay, Liechtenstein

Tracking lions!

This morning, we heard a lion roar. So we decided to do a “Spoor ID”. To do this, we needed to drive in the direction of the calls. There we found the tracks of the lion and tried to follow them. This was very exciting but very exhausting as well. We walked for about 4.5 hours and around 11km. We did not find the lion but it was an amazing experience. It was so great to know that there was a lion near us. I hope we will hear the lion again or that we will find its tracks again.

Nadja Gruler, 32 years old, 10 week stay, Germany

Hyenas bid us farewell

In the morning, we played cards and relaxed to enjoy our day off. In the afternoon, we helped set up the party for Carol for her birthday whilst she was out shopping for groceries with Sophie and Jens. It was difficult keeping the party a secret from Carol because it was a surprise. In the evening, one car took Carol and other volunteers to watch the sunset on a kopje and then we went to the party where we had a bush dinner and a camp fire to toast marshmallows. As we were leaving and everyone got into the cars to go back to camp, I heard something on the road and there were 2 hyenas! We watched them quietly until they left and then we went home.

Lenneke Baelemans, 16 years old, 4 week stay, The Netherlands



BUSH MEMORIES



African wild cat



Game drive



Elephants at top hide



Zebra



Full moon



Fence repair



Top kopje census



Donkeys at Thune Dam



On a baobab



Recycling elephant dung



Elephant on the road



Thune Dam bird census