



A Successful Wire Removal Operation by our Volunteers!

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the January 2014 Botswana Conservation Newsletter!

2014 is already here and the Conservation Project is back in full swing. Our staff came back from their Christmas break and immediately started preparing the camp for our first volunteer arrivals of 2014.

We said goodbye to David Hancock and Teresa Harris, our Managing couple in 2013, and wish them well on their next African adventure. We are delighted to welcome Elsa Stamm to the project, as our Camp Manageress and Social Manageress.

The Reserve continues to look lush and green and we have had an exceptional number of impala babies born this year. Everywhere you look there are nursery groups of up to 30 babies huddled together.

On January 1st we posted the following on Facebook:

“They say that whatever happens on the 1st January sets the scene for the rest of the year - well we had leopards and hyena and nearby a lion ran across someone's path - so here is hoping that we experience this for the whole of 2014.”

Well, so far the prediction is looking good. Every volunteer that has visited us in January has seen leopards and hyena and they have heard the lions roaring near camp on some evenings!

In this month's edition we introduce you to Elsa, we will hear from a few of our volunteers and there will be a project update on page 5 showing what we have achieved in January.

Enjoy our first newsletter for 2014!

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Meet Elsa Stamm

Botswana Conservation Camp Manageress and Social Manageress 2014

The Projects Abroad Botswana Conservation project is delighted to welcome Ms. Elsa Stamm to the team from January 2014.

Elsa hails from far away France and has decided that Africa is where she wants to be. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing and a Master's Degree in Marketing and International Management from her home country and she has obtained a Professional Field Guide qualification which includes Guiding, Tracks and Signs, Wilderness First Aid training, Birding, Trails Guiding and Firearm Handling. She has also gained valuable experience working in the field on guiding assignments.



Elsa's passion for nature and its conservation brought her to this very same place as a volunteer, after which she qualified as a field guide in South Africa, and now she is back in a professional capacity working on the project. Elsa brings much needed foreign language skills to the project in being able to speak English, French, Spanish and German.

She hopes to experience many more adventures and put all her efforts in to helping preserve this very special and beautiful land in Botswana.

How Can We Help?

Julie Poirier , 23 years old, Canadian French, 4 weeks stay.

We started our day with a “spoor” identification activity. It was very funny and pretty much interesting. I always thought that the track of a leopard will be bigger than the ones we saw, but it is still very impressive! We came back at the camp to have a good meal, and spent our little afternoon to do whatever we want until Helena and Judi came.



We then had a very good Conservation Debate, which was super interesting. It even made me think about all the things I do wrong for our planet.

It taught me a lot! I will for sure change my life style to keep the earth healthier and try teaching others to take care of our planet as well. We finished our day with a lot of discussion about lots of things... monkeys and hyenas. We had a good time and laughed a lot!

Sleeping Under the Stars

Scott Speers, 25 years old, Canadian, 8 weeks stay.

To whoever is reading this, Alien Plant Removal is extremely hard work, but it is more rewarding after you get to see how much everyone did! It was a pretty cool morning but still quite warm at the same time, perfect temperature actually. In the afternoon everyone just chilled and hung out for the most part, than Will and I started to construct cards and a box to hold the cards for a board game.



The sleep-out at Mamatumi hide was so great. When we got into the car and drove to the spot, it felt like we were on some sort of park ride, it just didn't seem real. Then, when the first animal was spotted

and the eyes lit up, it was a lot of excitement for me and the others.

The elephants were so majestic at night and quiet, which I did not expect! At the hideout bats would swoop down and make really cool moves, almost hitting us but then at the last second changing course.



Wild at Tuli Project Update

Bird census

In January we have conducted two Bird Census' on the Reserve and of particular note were seen European Bee-eaters, Carmine Bee-eaters, Woodlands Kingfisher, and Diederick's cuckoo.

We also conducted our first Thune Dam census for the year and recorded 114 individual birds including the following species:

Blacksmith Lapwing, African Spoonbill, Red-Billed Teal, African Darter, Grey-headed Gull, African Fish Eagle and Osprey and White-Breasted Cormorant.

Snare Removal

We have continued to focus our attention on the boundary fence between our wilderness area and the community land and have conducted anti-poaching activities there, as well as in the Reserve itself.

Thankfully, we have not found many snares this month (8 in total), but those found, have been removed. At this time of the year so many animals have their babies and are vulnerable to being caught in snares.

The predators that track these babies are equally at risk as is all the other wildlife on the Reserve, so our anti-poaching efforts will always be a focus of the project.

Alien Plant Removal

The rains arrive at this time of the year and while all the indigenous vegetation flourishes, so do the alien plants that remain on Reserve.

Interestingly it is believed that some of the alien vegetation arrived many, many years ago in horse feed and it continues to grow to this day. Volunteers have been busily removing as much as they can and it is hoped that over time we will manage to eradicate these plants.

Road Repairs and Erosion Control

With rains always comes damage to roads and areas where there is erosion. We have spent a lot of time this month fixing a very large eroded part of the river road and we have had to cut a new road on the northern side of the Reserve because the rain washed the original one away.

Bush Memories



Clockwise from top *Old fencing wire removal; the first leopard sighting of the year; building up gabions to fill with rocks for erosion control; a curious visitor to Motswiri Camp, right next to the car port; picking up those rocks!!!; A spring hare found on a drive back in the dark to camp.*





Clockwise from top left: *Volunteers using strong wire cutters to remove old fencing wire; another one of our big cats – seen right near camp; a curious vervet checks up on us; masters of invention – the volunteers developing a board game for the rainy days; elephant on the Reserve; the rarely seen giraffe;*

