

## **SOUTH LUANGWA CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

### **APRIL AND MAY 2005 UPDATE**

Dear Members and Friends,

We've had a very exciting and busy couple of months in April and May. The park has dried out considerably, most of the access roads are open, and the game is much more abundant. The park seems drier than it normally is at this time of year and many of the waterholes and lagoons are considerably smaller than they usually would be by now. Due to the intermittent rains we had this year (having had half of it in just one month); there are fears of an increase in snaring. Scores of farmer's crops were damaged and we expect to receive more reports of snares during the course of the year.

Wildlife snaring is a potentially serious threat to Zambia's wildlife industry and to community based management programs. High levels of snaring are unsustainable and can have adverse affects on photographic and hunting safaris.

May I take the opportunity again to remind all safari guides and camp managers to please report all incidents of snared animals to myself or the SLCS base? I have met a few guides this year who were not even aware that we have the equipment to dart and immobilize snared animals. I have recently purchased more drugs from South Africa so we are well stocked.

I have also joined the anti-snaring committee (a local CBNRM program) and with community involvement we hope to be able to reduce snaring through sensitization and education.

#### **Elephant Sport Hunting (ESH)**

The debate about ESH still continues and the number of stakeholders disputing the proposal has increased. I attended a meeting in Lusaka in May with Members of ZAWA, the Safari Hunters Association, the Tourism Council of Zambia and Conservation Lower Zambezi. The outcome of the meeting was that Zambia will go ahead with ESH as a means to raise money for the communities most affected by Human Elephant Conflict. Fifty percent of the estimated U\$13,500 per elephant will be handed over to the community through the Community Resource Boards (CRB's) and Village Actions Groups (VAG's). In principle, ploughing wildlife money directly back into the community is plausible and is a means whereby the park can sustain itself. However, Zambia on the whole has not managed to protect it's elephants sufficiently, whereby the hunting of these species will not affect the make up of the population. A few important formalities still need to be finalized, such as the changing of the Statutory Instrument, which for the past 20 years has banned all elephant hunting in Zambia but other than that, ZAWA seems geared to set this controversial plan into action.

If any elephants are to be hunted at all, we feel that we should try our best and protect the last iconic bulls in Luangwa. I am sure everyone can vouch that there are only a few of these remaining.

### **Hippo Culling in Lower Lupande – South Luangwa**

Hippo culling started almost two months ago in Lower Lupande. Two hundred and sixty hippos have been allocated each year for the next five years. The overall aim of this operation is to curb the population to some extent, conduct scientific research and provide a means of revenue for the community. Fifty percent of the meat should go to the local community and also, a percentage of income obtained from the culling.

The site of the culling operation is well kept we have been in contact with people who have witnessed the actual shooting of the hippos. So far, only one bullet per hippo and almost all were clean brain shots, so a much improved operation compared to the last one undertaken in Luangwa. We have also been impressed with the work that ZAWA's research department is conducting, despite having very little equipment.

I recently had a look at the laboratory at ZAWA and was shocked at what they had, quite literally nothing. There is a number of glass jars filled with various foetuses of all kinds, even a very small perfectly formed elephant obtained from long gone elephant culling days. Apart from those, they have little else which is a waste, as ZAWA does have a brilliant ecologist based here. At the moment we are looking for donations for the lab and have already received a few second hand bits of equipment, like microscopes, slides, dissecting kits etc. If anyone has access to any of this sort of equipment that they would be able to donate please contact me for a list of requirements. Thank you.

### **New Uniforms**

The new uniforms arrived – all 800kg's of them!! You can see in the pictures below how great they look. Among the equipment for each scout is: backpacks, patrol trousers, patrol shirts, t-shirts, patrol boots, socks, a fleece, raincoat, drill cap, beret, webbing belt, knife, torch and sleeping mat. We have also supported the Kakumbi Village Scouts with the same new uniforms. Since we have started working with them frequently, our team is reinforced and our combined efforts have resulted in more results.

The scout equipment has boosted morale and self-confidence amongst the scouts and they are now extremely proud of the way they look. Physical appearance also promotes the way in which ZAWA and the community perceive the SLCS officers and at the same time encourages professionalism.

### SLCS Scouts showing off their new uniforms



### A week in Lusaka

Amon Banda and I travelled to Lusaka recently for the hand over of the two new Land cruisers. We spent the afternoon at the Royal Danish Embassy with the Ambassador and Counselor and members from the press. As you can imagine, we are thrilled and very proud of our new cars. In Lusaka we had them fitted with bull bars and roll bars and rhino lining in the back and they are looking fantastic.

We have produced great results over the past five years using our old cruiser and although it needs a lot of TLC it is still a valued car. However, if you take a look at the new ones and then at the old one you can see why we were in need of new cars. Being able to drop off more than one patrol at a time will increase our coverage of the park and we expect our results to increase as well. One of the cars will also be used to visit community projects and chili fence sites.

### **Hand over of new vehicles in Lusaka at the Royal Danish Embassy.**

Amon Banda with Ambassador Orla Bakdal.



While in Lusaka I also spent time getting the SLCS and Kakumbi Village scouts insured for accident and in the worst case, death. Having this kind of insurance is much appreciated by the scouts as they are normally not covered for anything. It gives a sense of value and self esteem.

### **SLCS Base Celebration sponsored by EIA**

In April, we had a visit from the Environmental Investigation Agency (London) who has been supporting us since the beginning of Ratz. Mary and Paul usually visit us every year for ongoing investigations and other work related issues. This year they wanted to celebrate our achievements and came up with the idea for the celebration, and covered all costs for the day. A much larger audience turned up than we expected. We invited the Honorable Chief Kakumbi, Area Warden ZAWA, all senior ZAWA staff, lodges and supporters. Over two hundred people (many children) turned up to see the parade and drill put on by SLCS officers and the short drama also performed by SLCS. Also as a treat, EIA had produced a video about SLCS with subtitles in Nyanja which was shown over and over again, well after dark. The kids could not get enough of it and could not believe that they were seeing some of their relatives on film. It was a great day ended off with a braai and drinks. Thank you to everyone for joining us and celebrating with us and a special thank you to EIA for the idea and paying for it all.

### **Scout Training Programme**

I have just been up to North Luangwa to finalize the last things for the training course. We will be sending almost all of the Kakumbi Village scouts on an intensive 10 week training course starting in the next week. We are using North Luangwa training instructors who are rated as the best and toughest in the country. It's a brilliant course and covers everything and we are very excited that we have been given this opportunity to be trained by these instructors, especially as we have been trying to get on this course for years.

The training camp is located inside the National Park but far away from tourist areas. This area has been chosen for a number of reasons and although most of the scouts will be away for this time, part of the course includes practical deployments so high poaching areas will be covered.

### **Iyoba Community School**

Now that we have almost finished building on the base, we have started on the Iyoba Community School Project. A new piece of land was allocated for the community by The Chief and is situated behind Nyamununga Village (behind BP area). I have been pleasantly surprised so far because the community is fully involved. The ladies have been clearing the land and have also been making thousands of bricks. It's great to be helping a community that is already helping itself and wonderful to be part of a school from the start.

### **Chilli Fence Programme**

The Chili fences really do work as a deterrent to elephants!! I have spent the last couple of days visiting different sites in different Chiefdoms where it really is working. It's unbelievable to see one plot with a chili fence in perfect condition, and the neighboring plot without a fence completely destroyed. You can even see elephant footprints going up to the fence and then turning away. Obviously it is not only a simple chili string that keeps the animals away, it has to be a combination of burning chili and banging drums as well. There have also been reports of buffalo being deterred, and in Msoro, bush pigs don't like chili either.

It seems to be catching on slowly and at the next workshop another thirty farmers have asked if they can join the project. Apart from encouraging the chili fences themselves, we will be conducting a number of experiments with fences along the river front at elephant crossing points. We are also trying to encourage farmers to start using the fences around their villages, and we will be trying to promote chili as a cash crop.

Antonia DeMatto of Working Hand in Hand, an American non profit organization, is supporting the chili fence project and will be donating some treadle water pumps as an incentive for chili as a cash crop. A special thanks to Antonia for supporting this valuable project.

Please find a report of patrols and results for April and May below.

Thank you so much to everyone supporting SLCS, until next time, best wishes

Rachel.

### **April patrols and results**

DATE	AREA PATROLLED	RESULTS	OTHER INFO
1.4.05 day patrol	Kafunta, Nkwali, Kalawani	No snares recovered.	Wounded buffalo seen.
3.4.05 day patrol	Nkwali, Jason's village.	22 snares removed	

5.4.05 day patrol	Chowo	4 snares removed	
5.4.05 day patrol	Nkwali, Wildlife, Kapani	17 snares removed	
7.4.05 day patrol 8.4.05 5 day patrol	Chichele Salt Pan Musanzala, Mundalila	1 snare	2 gunshots heard
8.4.05 11 day patrol	Rhino Loop, Manzi	No signs	
20.4.05 10 days	Nyamaluma, Chichele, Kapamba	Apprehended 1 suspect and 1 muzzle loading gun.	
20.4.05 10 days	Luwi, Kasweta Wildlife Camp		Heard gunshots and found 1 poached elephant.
21.4.05 day patrol	Chowo	Confiscated illegal fishing nets and removed 3 illegal fishermen.	
21.4.05 10 days	Tundwe, Panza, Bongwe Lagoon, Manzi	2 snares removed	Poachers footprints
23.4.05 7 days	Mushilashi	Destroyed 4 drying racks and old poachers camps.	
30.4.05 day patrol	Nkwali, Kapani	Removed 15 snares	
Total days on patrol = 60		Snares removed = 61 1 suspect apprehended and 1 MLG.	

#### May Patrols and results

DATE	AREA PATROLLED	RESULTS	OTHER INFO
3.5.05 day patrol	Nkwali, Wildlife, Kalawani	Removed 2 fishermen and confiscated 2 nets	
5.5.05 10 days	Luwi, Katumbu, 3-rivers	No activities	Destroyed old drying racks
5.5.05 10 days	Manzi, Mchinga, Kapamba	No activities	Found 1 elephant, destroyed old drying racks and poachers.
7.5.05 day patrol	Kafunta, Nkwali	Removed 6 snares	
10.5.05 day	Mwangazi, Nkhoma	No activities	

10.5.05 10 days	Kauluzi, Lusiwashi	No activities	
10.5.05 10 days	Kasweta, Munyamadzi	No activities	
14.5.05 day patrol	Kalawani, Nkwali	Confiscated nets and chased fishermen	
16.5.05 night operation	Mkhanya	No activities	
16.5.05 day patrol	Matizye	Removed 7 snares	
17.5.05 day patrol	Chowo	Removed 4 snares	
18.5.05 investigations	Four days	Still pending	
19.5.05 day patrol	Wafwa	Removed 1 snare	
21.5.05 day patrol	Tamarind, Chinani	Removed 31 snares	
21.5.05 10 days	Kasasanya, Mwamba	Destroyed old drying racks	
24.5.05 10 days	Nyama Ya Njovu Kapamba	4 snares	
27.5.05 day patrol	Chamandaka	No activities	
29.5.05 day patrol	Kakuli	No activities	
31.5.05 day patrol	Chinzombo, Nkwali	Confiscated 3 fishing nets	
Total days		Snares removed x 49	