



Newsletter

January 2005

Fly Camps & Scouts

A good start to the year. Fly Camps are up and running and have been successful so far with a number of arrests and confiscations.

The fly camp program is essential at this time of year in protecting remote places that are considered high risk areas in the rains. During the dry season poachers are deterred from these locations by the operation of bushcamps, but if not monitored during the rains it becomes wide open to poachers. Unfortunately, due to ZAWA manpower, we have only been able to set up two permanent fly camps, one in the Kapamba Area and one in the Mwamba Area. We had hoped to be able to set up more but as ZAWA opened up some more permanent scout camps along the escarpment there is a shortage of man power. However, despite not having more fly camps, SLCS and ZAWA have still managed to come up with a program that ensures there are regular 10 day patrols in high poaching areas for the duration rains.

At this time of year, the SLCS boat is invaluable as it is the only boat available to us and ZAWA for deployment of patrols. SLCS has recently ordered a new engine and ZAWA has promised to purchase a second boat in the next few weeks which will at least enable us to be more mobile during the rains.

Ed Sayer, our Operations Manager is now back from North Luangwa for the rains and is overseeing all fly camp operations together with our Unit Leader, Richard Zulu.

Glenton and the helicopter were here again in January and donated valuable time and resources by deploying fly camp scouts and regular patrols and delivering rations and first aid supplies to remote scout camps near the escarpment.

Thank you once again to Glenton Combes, Jeremy Pope and Conservation Foundation Zambia.

We have recently employed another ex-National Parks scout who has many years of experience in the field as a senior scout and investigator. Collins Matepeta was retrenched during the transition from National Parks to Zambia Wildlife Authority and we are happy he is able to join SLCS.

Scout of the Month

This month's scout of the month bonus goes to Jaston Nyama whose unfailing dedication to his job has impressed us. The aim of the bonus is to boost scout morale and provide another incentive when in the field. SLCS scouts already receive bonus's for arrests and recoveries and a hardship allowance for fly camp operations.

Snaring

Snaring continues to be a huge problem in South Luangwa, as in any human-animal conflict zone. Recently I darted a lioness between Nkwali and Wildlife Camp who had a hideous snare around her front paw. It had ripped the flesh off right down to the bone but luckily there were no signs of infection at all. We dosed her up with antibiotics and cleaned the wound and she was up on her feet a few hours later. She will still need to be monitored, as she was looking rather thin. She is part of a pride of five who are usually in the Nkwali / Wildlife Camp area so hopefully she will catch up with them in the next few days and feast. Thanks to RPS staff for reporting it immediately, enabling us to act quickly. SLCS scouts continue to do regular anti-snaring patrols in the Mfuwe area.



Condolences to Mary Nkhoma's family

Sadly, on the 23rd January, one of our trustees and dear friend Mary Nkhoma passed away in Lusaka. Mary's input in the local community and South Luangwa Conservation Society was greatly valued. But above all she was a dear friend to all of us, a big lady with a big heart. We will miss her very much and our thoughts are with her two daughters.

New Trustee for SLCS

We would like to welcome Derek Solomon (ex - Zimbabwe) as our new trustee on the SLCS Board. Derek is a renowned bird specialist and long term active conservationist and we are thrilled to have him on board. We look forward to his valuable input in to the Society.

New Base

The new base is coming along well. Richard, Amon and I hope to move into the new office this week and set up the control room. The two senior staff houses for the Unit Leader and Admin Officer are almost ready and will free up two houses on the old base for new staff.

Thanks

I'd like to say a special thanks to Mr & Mrs Higgley for their very kind donation towards patrol expenses and tree planting. Thank you also to all the lodges and individual sponsors for their continued support.

January Patrols

There were 5 ten day patrols during January in addition to several shorter ones. A poached elephant carcass was found and old drying racks destroyed. 2 suspects were arrested and their firearms and axes confiscated when 2 dead hippos were discovered. A fresh elephant carcass was found but the ivory had already been removed.