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Field report: It's boma-building time at RCP!

The erection of secure predator-proofing livestock enclosures, known locally as *bomas*, is a vital element of what we at the Ruaha Carnivore Project do to prevent human - wildlife conflict, to protect livestock from being killed by carnivores and to prevent families from losing their livelihoods. It's the start of the *boma*-building season, which traditionally swings into action shortly after the heavy rains are past. The *boma* material arrives at the camp and the job of careful preparation begins. Currently the team is cutting and welding the structures, and reports are that the work is progressing well and the team is on track to start erecting *bomas* from the beginning of July. The team has a target of erecting not less than 10 per month, but due to the popularity of the *bomas*, they may need to increase their output to meet the pastoralists' needs.



Photo (left): Materials used to construct the livestock enclosures bomas include strong wire-mesh.

Photo (right): Strong steel tubing. Traditional bomas are weak structure made of local natural materials and are easily penetrated by carnivores.

Photo credits: Jacob David

The *boma*-building project, supported by National Geographic, as well as other donors, is unique in that it is a true partnership between RCP and the villagers. Villagers who pay 25% towards the materials and commit towards maintaining the boma are eligible for subsidized veterinary medicines. The good news is that livestock kept in RCP built *bomas*, can rest easy at night, as can their owners, as the *bomas* are proven to be over 95% effective at reducing carnivore attacks. With this proven success, we plan to continue to expand it across the study area.



Photo: Building the boma takes a team of dedicated workers at least one day and usually more, as they dig the poles and wire down into the ground to prevent hyaenas digging under them. Once completed, though, the boma is extremely strong and they have proved very effective at preventing attacks.

Photo credits: Justin Chambulila

The project works hard to try to ensure that local livestock has the best protection possible through a combination of reinforced *bomas*, livestock guarding dogs, and education about best-practice livestock protection through our conflict officers in local villages. Villagers can also call upon the protection of our Lion Defenders - a crack team of local warriors who are available 24/7 and who step in quickly to assist when carnivores are present and there is risk of attack, or when attacks occur and families and livestock are at risk. The Lion Defenders often help people to reinforce their *bomas* in traditional ways, using densely packed thornbush, if they cannot yet afford the contribution towards a wire *boma*.



Photo (left): Materials from making the boma structures being loaded into the storeroom at the camp for safe-keeping before being transported to the villages for erection - where everyone helps to get them up to keep the precious livestock safe.

Photo (right): Once the wire mesh and the steel poles are secured, the boma is reinforced by using local materials. Here Lion Defender Joseph Dendu puts the finishing touches to a boma he has helped to reinforce.

Photo credits: Jacob David, Ruaha Carnivore Project

Wedding bells Barabaig-style

Celebrations are in the air as Alex Sedoyeka, a Ruaha Carnivore Project Lion Defender in Zone D (Mwira) who has been with RCP since 2014, marries his true love - in traditional Barabaig style. When Alex proposed to his true love, Maria Emanuel from Manyara region, and she accepted, he was very happy. Following Barabaig marriage custom he paid 1 cow, 1 goat and a bucket of honey as the price for his bride, and was then given permission to marry her.



Photo (left): Alex, one of our brave Lion Defenders, on his wedding day - wearing a lion T-shirt in honour of the occasion!

Photo (right): His bride during the women's ceremony.

Alex is a Barabaig senior kijana (warrior) and respected in his village. Before joining RCP, was an active hunter and it was common for his age group to hunt lions, elephants and buffaloes. As Alex says: 'I didn't know anything about the conservation of lions and their importance to my community as I have never been to school. Through being a Lion Defender I have learnt many things about the biological aspects - and the conservation of lions and other carnivores and their importance to my community, which has made me change my attitude towards lions, from being an enemy of lions to being their friend'.

On the first day of the wedding celebration, the bride, according to tradition, can refuse to enter the groom's boma until she is rewarded with livestock from the bridegroom and all his relatives. After she is satisfied, she is then given fresh cow's milk to drink, and will then enter the boma.

Following the traditions of Barabaig marriage, the wedding lasts for four days. On the first day, the bridegroom visits two neighbouring bomas and chooses two mamas (married women) who 'manage' the wedding. These mamas are 'wedding law' and are in charge of the food, the choice of guests and the preparation of the bride - which includes rubbing her with animal fat.



Photo: Barabaig women wear very traditional clothes for ceremonies, such as these amazing goat-skin cloaks with intricately beaded skirts. Here they are wrapping our Director, Amy, in one of the skirts and finding out, to everyone's amusement, that white women have quite a different build from lithe Barabaig women!

Photo credit: Penelope Rogers

On day two of the celebrations the bride invites her friends to attend the wedding. After a day of celebrations, they take her to the meeting point for the morning where she will meet her groom. It is here that they say goodbye to her as a girl, before she starts her new life as a married woman. As a married woman, she will never again attend their normal *dangas* (traditional gatherings) where warriors and girls meet and discuss traditional matters. On day 2 the official dancing and singing starts! The *mamas* dominate the singing during the day, but in the evening the warriors and girls dominate by singing and dancing outside the *boma* at the meeting point known as *getang'orda* (tree of meeting).

On day three the women take the bride out very early in the morning, before the livestock are led out of the *boma*, where she spends the entire day as part of the ritual of blessing the livestock, until the livestock return from the fields in the evening. The *mamas* sing and dance while the bride stays in the shade. While the *mamas* dance and sing they are on the lookout for any man walking alone, then according to custom, they go and catch him and take off his clothes and tease him until decide to let him go. This is a very common joke and is allowed as part of the customary celebrations... so, whenever a man sees the women dancing on their own they are very scared. In the evening when the livestock return to the *boma*, the bride escorts them in and stays for a while before she is taken by the girls to *getang'orda* to mourn overnight.

On the last day, the bride repeats the ritual, staying in the *boma* with the *mamas* until the livestock return. In the evening, the *vijanas* (warriors) and the girls remain in the *boma* until around midnight when the wedding celebrations come to an end. Just to be sure that their task is completed successfully, the two *mamas* will stay to make sure that the bridegroom and his bride spend the night together.

And the winner of the CCT challenge is IDODI village!

To encourage local people to see the linkage between community benefits and wildlife presence, our Community Camera Trapping (CCT) programme enables villagers to place camera-traps on their land, and villagers which record more wildlife receive more benefits. Each wild animal that is camera-trapped generates a certain number of points depending on the species, and every 3 months, the points are summed to see which village has won.



Photo: These lionesses, camera-trapped on Mahuninga village land, generated 30,000 points for the village (15,000 points per individual), so was a great spot!
Photo credit: Ruaha Carnivore Project



Photo: Points are awarded for any mammal, to encourage the conservation of prey as well as predators - this kudu gets the village 2000 points.
Photo credit: Ruaha Carnivore Project



Photo: The African wild dog (camera-trapped here by Idodi village) is the species which generates most points (20,000 points each), and because they occur in groups, a pack of wild dogs can generate several hundred thousand points.
Photo credit: Ruaha Carnivore Project

During the most recent round of the competition, Idodi village came out tops, followed by Kitisi, Mafuluto and Malinzanga villages. In celebration, a *sherehe* was held at *Njachii Boma* in Idodi village attended by a host of villagers from Idodi, including the local government, ward leaders, the police and leaders from the Masaai, Barabaig and Hehe tribes. All the villages receive benefits, but the top-scoring one receives the most, and all benefits are split between education, healthcare and veterinary medicines, as they were the priorities selected by the local villagers.



Photo: One of the requests from the Idodi village was for big pots for making porridge for the school children. RCP runs a very successful Porridge Project where children receive nutritious meals at school. The village children are seen here celebrating the arrival of the pots!

Photo: Ruaha Carnivore Project

The guest of honour was Chief Park Warden from Ruaha National Park. In his speech, he thanked RCP for the great many things which the project is doing, and which he greatly appreciates. He congratulated Dr Amy Dickman, RCP Director, and thanked her for her good idea of establishing Ruaha Carnivore Project in the Ruaha landscape! He said the benefits that conservation is providing to the communities is immense and his advice to all present is to cooperate with Amy in her efforts to protect large carnivores and wildlife, especially pastoralists. He further said that the park is safe because of the presence of RCP, and they are happy to hear that RCP is implementing collaring of lions. According to him 'this is great work that will help in research, protection and reducing human carnivore conflicts'.

The event went off smoothly, thanks to the CCT team (Hillary and Stanley) and the rest of the RCP staff who all made the *sherehe* an evening to remember!

Species Spotlight: meet the mischievous honey Badger



Photo: Camera-trapped honey badger at Mwangusi Safari Camp in the Park. The honey badger (*Mellivora capensis*) is the largest terrestrial mustelid (member of the weasel family) in Africa. They are curious, canny and fearless.

Photo credit: Ruaha Carnivore Project

Honey Badgers occupy a range of habitat types from the rain forests of the Congo to the edge of the Sahara, and are found from sea level to altitudes of 4000m in the Bale Mountains of Ethiopia. As the name suggests, they favour honey and will consume great quantities of bee larvae which they dig out of the ground, or raid bee hives and can put up very aggressive threat displays, with foul smelling secretions which may irritate eyes and skin. It is thought that the smell of the pouch may have a calming influence on bees when raiding beehives.



Photo: A honey Badger feeding on a lizard. They are powerful diggers, and use their powerful forepaws to lift stones to dig small rodents out of their burrows or to tear the bark from trees. The paws are used to hold their food down as they devour all parts of their prey, which also includes dangerous snakes, spiders, scorpions, frogs, rodents, lizards, eggs, and birds. Photo credit: Anthony Bannister Wildscreen Arkive

Although their name conjures up images of cuddly furry animals, nothing can be further from the truth. Best known for their fearsome temperament, honey badgers can be unpredictable and they will readily attack animals much larger than themselves, including humans. They will often turn and charge, even if they are pursued by a much larger foe and will go as far as biting the tyres on vehicles if approached too closely. They have skin that is incredibly tough - said to be able to withstand a spear - and very loose, so they can turn around in the jaws or claws of a larger predator and bite back. They have been known to chase away young lions to take their kills and there are records of honey badgers attacking big cats in self-defence. No wonder lions and leopards tend to avoid them!



Photo: Honey badgers appear to form monogamous pairs that stay together for most of the year and will usually raise a single cub, or occasionally twins.
Photo credit: Ruaha Carnivore Project

It's almost impossible not to imagine that they're having fun as they dance around snakes, courting danger at every turn. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPKlryXwmXk>. The fights are vicious and the honey badgers certainly get bitten by the snakes before they finally emerge victorious. [Danielle Drabeck](http://www.slate.com/blogs/wild_things/2015/06/16/honey_badger_venom_resistance_biotologists_discover_the_secret.html) set out to understand how they survive these ordeals. http://www.slate.com/blogs/wild_things/2015/06/16/honey_badger_venom_resistance_biotologists_discover_the_secret.html

She and her colleagues at Minnesota University revealed clues of an evolutionary arms race between the honey badger and the venomous snake! But why would a honey badger need venom resistance in the first place? Why doesn't it avoid venomous snakes, like more sensible mammals? 'Snakes,' says Drabeck, 'are an excellent source of meat.' Up to 25 percent of the honey badger's omnivorous diet consists of venomous snakes. But the honey badger doesn't eat snakes out of desperation. Evolving to withstand snake venom is like being the only person at a party who can eat the extra-hot salsa: You get it all to yourself.'



Photos: Having an indestructible military tank - a Ratel (right) - named after them, pays tribute to their toughness. Incidentally, the word Ratel is derived from the Dutch word for honey, which is 'Raat', and takes us back to the colonial era of Africa when the Dutch East India Company dominated the seas.

Incidentally, they are of 'least concern' on the IUCN Red List and one can understand why - this is one mustelid best left alone! For more information on the honey badger, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZa1aMrLpmU>

Sightings

The Sightings programme is an important part of our work, where we engage local Park drivers to record images of wildlife for us. We ask them to record all large carnivore sightings, so that we can build up a database of presence, but they also often record other good images of wildlife - which are always great to see! RCP provides the drivers with data collection devices and cameras, and after they record a certain number of sightings in a year, the drivers get a new camera and can either keep or sell their old one, as a reward for participating in the programme.



Photo (left): Picture-perfect black backed jackal with its large, pointed ears and typical dog-like alert expression. They usually occur in pairs and are often seen at the aftermath of lion kills.
Photo credit: Abraham Sokolo from [Ruaha River Lodge](http://www.ruahariverlodge.com)
Photo (right): The Nile crocodile is common in the park's Great Ruaha River. Crocodiles look deceptively immobile when they are sunning themselves, but can launch themselves at passing prey, so are definitely not to be messed with!
Photo credit: [Flycatcher Safari Camp](http://www.flycatchersafaricamp.com)



Photo (left): A communal nest of the sociable weaver bird. According to David Attenborough, 300 - 400 birds will live in one of these 'apartment blocks', which are so heavy they can break the branch they're built on. These nests are built by pushing single straws into a gigantic bale and are maintained by all the inhabitants. The advantage of the large communal 'apartment block' is that it keeps cool in the day and retains the heat during the night. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jPibkNy7LM
Photo (right): Migrating storks in the Ruaha landscape. In a recent study by the Samsun Municipality in north eastern Turkey and the ornithology research centre at Ondokuz Mayıs, data from tracking devices attached to 8 migrating storks, revealed one stork flew 7,000 kilometres from Samsun in Turkey to Mozambique, another bird in the study flew 6,000 kilometres to Tanzania, and two more arrived in Sudan and Ethiopia. The ornithology research centre head,

Kiraz Erciyas Yavuz, said it was known that storks migrated from Turkey to Sub-Saharan Africa, but the journeys to Tanzania and Mozambique had exceeded the researchers' expectations.
Photo credits: [Ruaha Carnivore Sightings Programme](#)



Photo (left): This lion cub is having a great time stalking his first prey animal - his mother!
Photo (right): A young elephant seen using his trunk to investigate his surroundings. An elephant's trunk is an extremely sensitive and fantastically evolved body part: it is made of rings of helical muscle, much like the structure of octopus tentacles, and is able to move in all directions with amazing strength and precision.
Photo credits: [Asilia Kwihala Camp](#)



Photo: We are probably biased, but we still particularly love seeing the images of large carnivores that people take in the Park, such as this beautiful leopard: it reminds us all of why we do what we do!
Photo credit: Lorenzo Rossi, [Kwihala Camp](#)

Lunch is served at the camp kitchen - for wildlife as well as people!
Our camp kitchen is very basic (although we hope soon to be improved!), and is often visited by various wildlife species, ranging from weaver birds to rodents, civets and snakes. In this video clip, a twig snake which spends much of its time in the tree by the kitchen eats its own lunch, in the form of a rather unlucky bird. This may not be one for sensitive viewers, but the snake needs to eat too...

To view the [Twig Snake having lunch](#) click here or paste into your browser:
([web.facebook.com/ruahacarnivoreproject/videos/1574926102579971/](https://www.facebook.com/ruahacarnivoreproject/videos/1574926102579971/))
Credit: Ruaha Carnivore Project

From the Research Desk:

Our Director, Amy Dickman, was a co-author on a new study this month which examined the performance of African protected areas for lions and their prey: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320716305481>

Protected areas, particularly National Parks, are critically important for large carnivores such as lions, as they act as refuge areas away from human pressure, and are usually the key source area for any wider lion populations. However, this paper showed that many protected areas were doing poorly at conserving lions: less than a third of them had even half the number of lions that they should be able to support, with the majority also failing to conserve prey species at half the expected level. Bushmeat poaching was identified as the most important threat facing both lions and other wildlife in protected areas, with human-wildlife conflict, and livestock and human encroachment other important threats. The paper highlighted the need to invest more resources - particularly in terms of management budgets - for key protected areas, to ensure that they are able to maintain their role as vital source areas for both lions and their prey.



Photo: These pastoralists are enjoying a rare opportunity to visit Ruaha National Park through our Park visit programme, but new data suggests that more resources are needed in order to maintain lions and other wildlife at good numbers in protected areas.
Photo credit: Fenrick Msigwa, Ruaha Carnivore Project

Meet the Team: Alphonse Constantine

'Hi, my name is Alphonse Constantine from the Mallaya clan. I'm in charge of the RCP Livestock Guarding Dogs Programme. I am very proud to run the programme as it is one of the tools which is

proving very effective in protecting livestock, which in turn reduces retaliatory carnivore killings.

‘My family comes from Arusha in the north of Tanzania. I am single with no children and live at the camp. I have studied Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Management at Sokoine University of Agriculture at Morogoro in Tanzania. When I heard about a vacancy at RCP, I applied and was accepted.’

Alphonse proved himself extremely hard-working and capable, and also had a great affinity for our Anatolian Shepherd livestock guarding dogs, so as well as working on some of our ecological research such as the camera-trapping, he also manages the livestock guarding dogs.



Photo: Alphonse and RCP Director, Dr Amy, out on one the regular trips to check up the guarding dogs, where Hodari is one of the stars of the show. Sadly, these working dogs don't have a long life expectancy (as with working dogs worldwide) due to all the hazards associated with the job. What they DO get in bucketfuls from Alphonse and the families they live with, is love and respect for the great job they do to protect the families' livelihoods. Photo credit: Ruaha Carnivore Project



Photo: Alphonse in the sub-village of Mparapande in the Mapogoro village. This is where Hodari lives and guards the livestock. Its weekly shampoo day and here he is instructing the family members in the village how to apply the shampoo and to rinse it off. Hodari's owner, (standing left with staff) says that if Hodari dies, it will be the same as when a member of the family dies. Photo credit: Margaret Roestorf

Alphonse has the all-important job of maintaining the health of the guarding dogs and ensuring that their diets are adequate for them to be in top condition to do the job at hand. He says: ‘I am very happy to have Dr Jessica Manzak from the USA Peace Corp (through WCS Tanzania) helping me to diagnose and treat the dogs - and am learning a lot from her. I watch the dogs behaviour very carefully, and look for signs of laziness and lack of appetite, I also take their temperatures as part of my routine checking. The diseases that worry me the most are trypanosomiasis, which can result in blindness to the dogs and often can be fatal, and babesia, which is spread by tick bites.

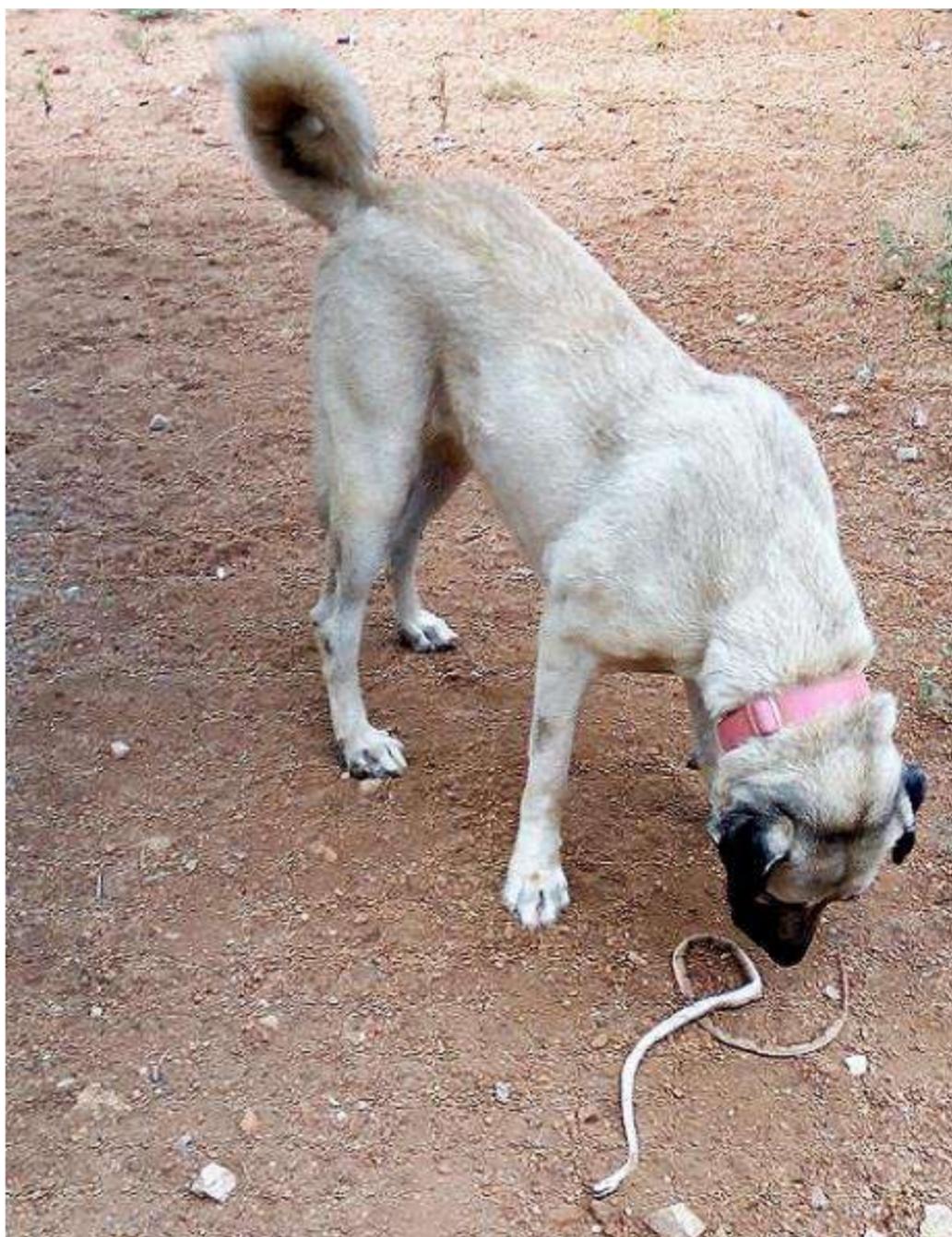


Photo (left): Alphonse, in the village of Tungamalenga, buying goat meat for the guarding dogs in the breeding programme at the camp. Goat meat or beef are given to them every few days to keep their weight up.

Photo (right): On days that they don't get meat Alphonse gives them fish known as dagaa (right) or eggs, mixed with rice or ugali (porridge).

Photo credits: Margaret Roestorf

Alphonse says ‘Recently we got the joyful news that Busara has finally fallen pregnant by Poppy, a strong village dog identified as the best mating partner in the pilot project to develop slightly smaller, more resilient guarding dogs. The union will hopefully result in the long-awaited cross-breeds that will be smaller in stature, more agile and hopefully will cost the villagers less to maintain in daily meals.’



*Photo: Snakes are constantly present in the Ruaha landscape and are one of the dangers that guarding dogs face. Over the recent past Busara was confronted by a black spitting cobra, which she killed, a tiger snake (in photo) which she also killed and a small puff adder.
Photo: Alphonse Constantine, Ruaha Carnivore Project*

Alphonse has a strict schedule which he sticks to: ‘Every week I go out to visit the guarding dogs in the village. The dogs are checked for wounds and any signs of illness. Every week the dogs are shampooed to prevent fleas and ticks - I either supervise or do the job myself.’

‘During the day, the dogs are out with the herders guarding the livestock, and at night they are brought back to the village where they sleep in their own cage situated in the secured livestock enclosures together with the livestock they protect. The guarding dogs are fearless and if they’re left to roam free at night are likely to run into trouble with roaming wildlife.’

‘Recently there was an attack in the Mapogoro village and Jasiri (one of our female dogs) jumped the livestock enclosure fence and went after the lions that were attacking the livestock. She managed to fend them off, but sadly in the process, she was killed. We know this would be a risk for the dogs, but on the other hand we have also seen them successfully chase lions away, so we know they can be effective at defending stock from lions.’



*Photo: Two puppies - a local one on the left and the Anatolian Shepherd on the right - highlight the size difference even at only a few months old. The Anatolians have proved that they can be effective in Tanzania, but their very large size can make it hard for local people to maintain their food needs, so we will be interested to see how the cross-breeds fare.
Photo credit: Ruaha Carnivore Project*

‘What I like the most about my job is interacting with the dogs and I enjoy their behaviour especially the one which are living with their herds. I have seen that some dogs bark at a new goat if it is brought into the herd, even if they have over 100 in their herd, so it shows they really know their goats! Early in the morning when people are opening the doors, I have seen dogs run out and inspect the tracks, and run to the direction of where any hyaenas or other carnivores have come from, so they are really alert to these dangers. They are here for the security of the cattle and smallstock as well as people - they are not just a dog, but they a true guarding friend to the villagers.’

DVD Nights on the Pawaga side of the Park

Despite the global importance of the Ruaha area for wildlife, many local people don’t understand why anyone would be concerned about wildlife conservation, and don’t realise the particular significance of the Ruaha landscape. We use educational DVD nights, where people watch wildlife films as well as see a presentation about our work, to help increase awareness of these issues in the local area.

In the early years of the project, we focused most of our activities on the Idodi villages (there are two divisions in the study area, Idodi and Pawaga) as that was where there seemed to be most human-carnivore conflict and lion killing. However, there is very fast human population growth and increasing levels of conflict with wildlife on the Pawaga side, so we are expanding our work more to that side over time.



Photo: DVD nights are fun events, and provide a great opportunity for hundreds of villagers to come and learn more about wildlife and the project, and discuss our activities directly with our team.

Photo: Ruaha Carnivore Project

We hold several DVD nights per month, and recently in Pawaga, we had one DVD night which attracted over 500 men, women and children, from all walks of life and from different tribes, showing the huge interest in this subject. Stanley Mveyange, one of our Research Assistants who is helping to implement the DVD nights, said of the evening: 'They were very happy and they appreciated what RCP is doing for them, they promised positively to conserve animals, particularly after realizing that they are the ones which provides benefits in education, health and veterinary medicines.'

Park trips enable non-threatening encounters with wildlife

One of the most common reasons that people dislike, and often kill, carnivores around Ruaha is because they are scared of them. The fear of large carnivores is completely justified - they kill livestock quite regularly, which are key assets in traditional pastoralist societies, and also sometimes kill people. Unsurprisingly, if people see large carnivores when they are on foot, they feel intimidated and it is a generally negative experience.

To show that there is another side to wildlife - and to explain why the international community is so fascinated with big cats in particular - we take local villagers into the Park on educational trips, so they can experience wildlife in a non-threatening way. They can view lions and other wildlife from the safety of the RCP vehicle, so this provides a rare opportunity for them to be able to observe big cats and elephants in safety. These sightings lead to discussions about their experiences in their villages and gives priceless insights into the lives of people who live cheek and jowl with wildlife.



Photo: Sleeping lion viewed from the safety of the RCP vehicle - a very different and less intimidating beast than the ones that most villagers encounter attacking their stock.

Photo credit: Fenrick Msigwa, Ruaha Carnivore Project

Every month RCP does an average of six trips into the Park, and each year we take in hundreds of men, women and children. The trips are extremely popular, although we do sometimes have an issue with car sickness, as people are not used to the feeling of being in a vehicle. Attractions like the rope 'hanging bridge', the airstrip and the bridge across the river are all particularly enthralling for the villagers, and they also love seeing animals with their young, as it provides a completely different insight into these species. Since the Park trips started, more than 1000 villagers have had this enriching experience, and there is overwhelming evidence to show that the relationships formed, and the knowledge sharing on these trips, are contributing towards improved attitudes and easier human-wildlife coexistence on village lands.

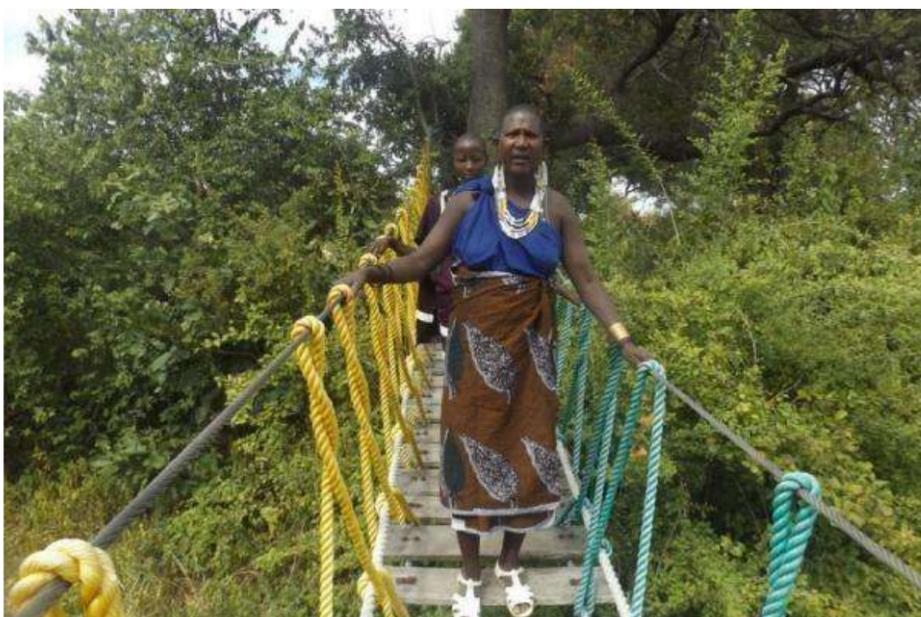


Photo: Maasai women tentatively crossing the 'hanging bridge' over Mdongya river. Local villagers have heard of this and always ask to see it, but are then often scared to try to cross it. Luckily our intrepid Research Assistant, Fenrick Msigwa, is on hand and often takes them across one by one to make sure they experience it!

Photo credit: Fenrick Msigwa, Ruaha Carnivore Project

THANK YOU ~ ASANTE SANA

As always, we thank all our donors for their generous and committed support. To dedicate your support, click below and find out more about our programmes:



Ecological research - RCP provides vital data on Ruaha's little-known carnivore populations through camera-trapping and recording carnivore sightings. More than 10,000 carnivore sightings have been recorded to date. ([Read more...](#))



Community camera-trapping - RCP trains and employs local villagers to set up and manage camera-traps on village land in return for community benefits, directly linking conservation with development. ([Read more...](#))



Protecting the livelihoods of villagers living in proximity to carnivores reduces conflict. Fortifying livestock enclosures and placing guarding dogs are proving successful in minimizing conflict. ([Read more...](#))



The RCP Lion Defenders actively prevent and stop lion hunts. These Lion Defenders are chosen from amongst the bravest and most influential warriors. ([Read more...](#))



Kids 4 Cats is a school-twinning programme where local schools are 'adopted' by international schools who raise at least US\$500 annually for them, to buy essential education material and equipment. ([Read more...](#))



Simba Scholars receive full scholarships for all four years of their secondary school. The cost is US\$2,000 per student and RCP is keen to expand the programme to more students. ([Read more...](#))



Porridge Project - No one likes to go to school hungry, so RCP and our partners make sure that local scholars have full tummies when they're at school - this increases attendance and attainment, employs local women and is a major benefit in villages where there is very little food security. ([Read more...](#))



DVD nights and Park trips provide education about conservation and species in a fun, non-threatening environment. To date more than 30 000 attendees have enjoyed DVD nights and more than 1,000 people have been on Park trips. ([Read more...](#))

Should you wish to know more about individual programmes we will happily send you more information. Please contact our communications manager, Margaret Roestorf at margaretroestorf.rcp@gmail.com. Should you wish to speak directly to the Director, Dr. Amy Dickman, please contact her at amy.dickman@zoo.ox.ac.uk.

To support our work, you can use one of the following channels:

If you haven't yet browsed through the [RCP wish list on Amazon](#), it's a great way to get connected to the project and find needs that suit your pocket and your passion.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/registry/wishlist/?ie=UTF8&cid=AMZKTSB73EMFA>
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To pay via **cheque** please contact Amy Dickman at amy.dickman@zoo.ox.ac.uk.

Until next month - so long... tutaonana



Photo: As the sun sets over the Ruaha landscape, we wish you a good month, until we see you next time!

Photo credit: Lorenzo Rossi

The Development and Alumni Relations System (DARS) provides a common source of data on all alumni, donors, students, staff and friends of the collegiate University. Our long-term intention behind this shared resource is to improve mutual understanding, by enhancing the quality of our communication at all levels and developing a better appreciation of our relationship with alumni, donors and friends. Please see www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/data_protection for information on the way in which your personal data are held and used in DARS. If you no longer wish to be contacted by the University, or wish to alter the way your data are held and used, please send a suitably worded email to database@devoff.ox.ac.uk