



## **RCP UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2014**

### **RCP highlighted in prestigious Tusk Conservation Awards**

We were thrilled when our Director, Amy Dickman, was named as one of the three international finalists for the Tusk Conservation Award. A journalist came out to visit the project before the event, leading to substantial coverage in the UK's *Telegraph* newspaper – a link to the article is here:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/africaandindianocean/tanzania/11244073/Tusk-Trust-Conservation-Awards-On-patrol-with-the-lion-guardians-in-Tanzania.html>

The nomination was a huge honour for the entire RCP team and led to some amazing exposure for the project. Amy and the other finalists were invited to a private reception with Prince William at Kensington Palace the day before the Awards dinner, which was a great opportunity to discuss the project directly with the Prince. He was clearly extremely interested in all aspects of conservation and was very well-informed about our work in Ruaha, which was great – and Amy and Prince William also bonded over the challenges of working with a small baby in your life!



*Amy meeting Prince William at a private reception in Kensington Palace*

The Awards Dinner was held at the five-star Claridge's hotel in London, and was a glittering red-carpet affair – very different from life in the bush! It was a wonderful event and a film was shown for all the finalists – our nomination film can be seen here:

<https://spectrecom.wistia.com/medias/t7csybsaxa>



*The three finalists for the Tusk Conservation Award with Prince William*

The Award eventually went to Herizo Andrianandrasana for his excellent conservation work in Madagascar, but even being a runner-up was great for the project. The whole evening celebrated all the finalists' projects and will hopefully generate significant interest and support for the project, so it was a hugely successful event. A short film showing the highlights of the evening, including coverage of RCP's work, can be seen here:

<http://www.tusk.org/tusk-conservation-awards-2014>

The Awards led to significant media coverage, including a piece in December's *Hello* magazine, which can be read online here:

<http://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/2014112622132/prince-william-conservation-tusk-awards/>

After the Awards, Amy was interviewed for Sky's Islam Channel TV, which has extensive reach, particularly in Africa, as well as by Kate Adie on the BBC World Service radio programme 'Weekend Break' – the interview can be heard here, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/weekend> - it is the 30.11.14 episode, and Amy's interview starts at 12 minutes 30 seconds.



*Coverage of the event in December's Hello magazine*

It was amazing for such a small project as RCP to get this kind of exposure, and we want to thank everyone who has worked with us in the field for all their efforts, as well as all our supporters around the world, as we would never have achieved our conservation success so far without your help. Fingers crossed we can do even more in 2015!

### **Monty leaves to start a PhD**

We are both happy and sad to announce that Monty, one of our Senior Research Assistants, has moved on from the project in order to start a PhD. Monty has been a key member of staff since 2012, and always brought a great sense of fun and enthusiasm to the team. We will all miss him at RCP, but we are very glad that his time with the project, and especially our efforts to help him get his Masters, have paid off with him being able

to take this next step in his career. Monty will be looking at wild dog ecology in the Ruaha landscape, so we hope that he will still be working closely alongside us, and we wish him every success in his PhD and his future career.



*Monty helping to build a boma – and smiling as usual!*

### **New books donated to twinned schools**

One of RCP's main aims is to give local people tangible benefits from carnivore presence, and one of the main local priorities is education. Therefore, RCP has twinned nine local schools with schools in the UK and US under the 'Kids 4 Cats' initiative, and twice a year we use the fund generated by the developed-world schools to donate books and other vital equipment to the twinned Tanzanian schools. In addition, our 'Simba Scholars', whose secondary-school education is funded through RCP's donors, receive new books and tuition materials each year.

Both teachers and students highly appreciate this support, as all the local schools have a shortage of books which makes studying and teaching rather difficult. Therefore in the name of all the schools we say "Asante sana!" – thank you very much! – and we hope that these partnerships will continue and expand in 2015. If you know of a school that would like to become one of our twinned schools (they have to raise a minimum of US \$500 per year) then please contact us on [rcpkids4cats@gmail.com](mailto:rcpkids4cats@gmail.com) as this kind of partnership really makes a difference to villagers wanting to live alongside large carnivores.



*Handing over new books to Kitisi Primary school children*



*Our “Simba Scholars” with their new learning materials*

### **RCP’s emergency transport service – saving lives in the bush**

Another community benefit linked to carnivore presence is that RCP assists communities with transport in the event of emergencies. In this remote area with no nearby medical facilities and very few vehicles, this often makes the difference between life and death for villagers. Pastoralists in particular often live in remote places in the bush, where encounters with wildlife can occur frequently. This month a young Barabaig man was attacked and badly injured by an elephant. The following day we were working in an area close to the young man’s home and were informed about the incident, so instantly we drove him to the next clinic – a long way from where he was. A couple of days later we were surveying households in an area far away from where the incident happened, and the Barabaig in that area had heard about RCP helping a member of their tribe and were full of appreciation. A good relationship with pastoralists and with communities in

general is crucial when trying to influence their attitude towards killing threatened species like elephant or lion, so these varied benefits are all important components of long-term conservation.



*The young Barabaig man being carried into the clinic.*

### **Networking with Cat Haven**

This month we had the pleasure of meeting Wendy and Dale from the conservation organisation Cat Haven based in California. We all share the common interest of protecting one of the last big lion populations worldwide – found here in the Ruaha ecosystem! It was great to chat and share ideas with these experienced and passionate cat lovers who are eager to link RCP with interested donors. We are looking forward to an enriching future collaboration. May the networking continue!



*Wendy (second from left) and Dale (far right) alongside Jombi, one of the safari guides, and Sonja and Msago*

## **Towards the end of a long dry season**

The dry season has been long and will soon come to an end – we hope! At this time of year the rivers have stopped flowing and the remaining pools of standing water are drying out. Such a long time without rain has significant impacts on the land, wildlife and people in the area – for instance, the lack of clean drinking water is beginning to affect the health of the local people who now have to resort to drinking poor quality water from sedentary pools in the river bed. RCP's Lion Guardian team have been helping villagers by bringing patients with stomach problems to the local hospitals for treatment as well as providing pure drinking water to the patients we help.

## **Lion Guardian's new Expansion into the Pawaga area**

Its expansion time in Ruaha again, as our Lion Guardians team now has its sights on the eastern edge of the park. We plan to introduce the programme to the Pawaga region, which is thought to have high levels of bush meat poaching and human-carnivore conflict. We have heard about retaliatory lion killing in this area and believe the introduction of Lion Guardians here will have a positive effect on the conservation of lions in the area. Two new zones will be designated and four new Guardians will be employed to patrol these high risk areas, thereby creating important conservation-related jobs for young warriors in another significant area.



*The Ruaha Lion Guardians team has expanded a lot from this original group of 5!*

## **Camera trap pictures**

In collaboration with PhD student Jeremy Cusack we have set up camera traps in different areas in Ruaha National Park, as well as in the surrounding Wildlife Management Area. The data help to provide much-needed knowledge about the

occurrence, distribution and demography of large carnivores and their prey, so will help inform future conservation and management plans for this vital area. In addition, they also provide wonderful snapshots into the lives of wild animals, and some recent highlights are shown below.



*A pair of leopards walking through the bush*



*This amazing shot captured a black-back jackal hunting an impala – perhaps rather optimistically!*



*Two of Ruaha's most iconic species encounter one another in the middle of the night, when a pride of lions approaches an elephant*



*This wonderful shot shows a bush-baby dropping by one of our cameras!*

## Sightings pictures

Meanwhile, our programme to collect information and photos of large carnivore sightings continues to expand, and always produces some incredible images. As well as highlighting the amazing value of Ruaha for large carnivores and other wildlife, the GPS locations of these images help us build up valuable maps of wildlife occurrence across the landscape.



*A cheetah using a dead baobab tree to have a better outlook on the area around it  
(taken by Leverd from Kwihala Camp)*



*A leopard resting, highlighting the beauty of its coat (taken by Leverd from Kwihala Camp)*



*What a lucky sight – a spotted hyaena during day time...*



*...and even better, with a cub! It can just be seen as a black head to the right of the mother's rump (taken by Sonja Lipenga)*



*A majestic male lion by one of Ruaha's baobab trees (taken by Leverd from Kwihala Camp)*



*Another beautiful shot of a leopard (taken by Said from Kwihala Camp)*



*Two leopards having a dispute high up in a baobab tree (taken by Leverd from Kwihala Camp)*



*A lion's life is tough – this one was wounded in what is likely to be one of many fights with other males for territory, females and hierarchy (taken by Leverd from Kwihala Camp)*



*A lioness feasting on an elephant kill (taken by Said from Kwihala Camp)*



*Prey like buffalo are extremely important for lions as they can feed a whole pride (taken by Said from Kwihala Camp)*



*A hug for mum (taken by Leverd from Kwihala Camp)*



*The next generation – looking very contemplative! (taken by Leverd from Kwihala Camp)*

Lastly, we just want to thank all of our supporters and wish you all a very merry Christmas, a great holiday season and a wonderful 2015!