

PERSERVERANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC



**African Wildlife
Conservation Fund**

Whilst the world continues to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, the African Wildlife Conservation Fund (AWCF) continues to fight to protect Zimbabwe's wildlife and uplift her people. We are working extremely hard to meet targets and goals, and are proud to have achieved an incredible amount over the last few months despite the unpredictability of the current times.

Thank you to each and every one of you for your continued interest in, and support of, our work. We could not do this without you! We hope you enjoy the read.

© Kim Wolhuter

- 🐾 We are proud to report **consistently strong numbers of African wild dogs** in both Savé Valley Conservancy (SVC) and Gonarezhou National Park (GNP) – 75 adult wild dogs across 12 packs in SVC and 105 adult wild dogs across 9 packs in GNP.
- 🐾 We carried out our **annual large carnivore spoor surveys** in GNP and SVC – the 12th and 13th annual survey respectively – contributing to a long standing data-set and providing valuable data for ecologists and management.
- 🐾 **Printed and distributed 1,000 educational posters** detailing how to 'Spot the Difference' between African wild dogs, jackals and spotted hyena to all our supported schools.
- 🐾 Carried out a **project for the provision of fresh running water** to Muvava primary school and surrounding community.
- 🐾 23 primary schools - directly involving 276 children, 68 teachers, and 207 community members - participated in our **annual conservation cluster competitions**.
- 🐾 **Welcomed our new attachment student**, Lennox Runduke, onsite and as part of the AWCF team!



We have so much more to share with you!

Please see below for more facts, photos and stories from the AWCF team, including some seriously cute photos of African wild dogs, as well as how you can [SUPPORT](#) our valuable work.

Safeguarding stronghold populations of African wild dogs.

African wild dogs continue to do well in both Savé Valley Conservancy (SVC) and Gonarezhou National Park (GNP), with recorded densities comparable with (in GNP), or higher than (in SVC), average known densities for the species - latest estimates suggest 105 adult wild dogs in GNP and 75 in SVC. During the 2020 denning season we had a total of 120 puppies born in the lowveld across 16 packs which denned, and have recorded 45% pup survival to date.

Given the recent concern over the stability of resident wild dog populations in other key conservation areas in Zimbabwe, the 21 resident packs which we help to safeguard in GNP and SVC represent a stronghold for the species in the country.

Want to help protect these remaining packs? Read below to learn more about our [NEW WEBSITE](#) and the many ways to support our work, or click here to [ADOPT A PACK!](#)

See below for highlights from the wild dogs in 2020:



Welcome Lennox Runduke.

Meet Lennox – our new attachment student from the National University of Science and Technology in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. **Lennox will live onsite with the AWCF team for this upcoming year (2021) and will join the team as a student and assistant.** He will also complete a research project focused on the conservation of African wild dogs under our supervision. Lennox is very passionate about wildlife conservation and he is determined to further his studies in order to meaningfully contribute to the world of wildlife conservationist and develop as a conservation practitioner. Lennox describes himself as a 'dog fanatic'. He practices training domestic dogs as a hobby - to Lennox, a dog is his best friend!

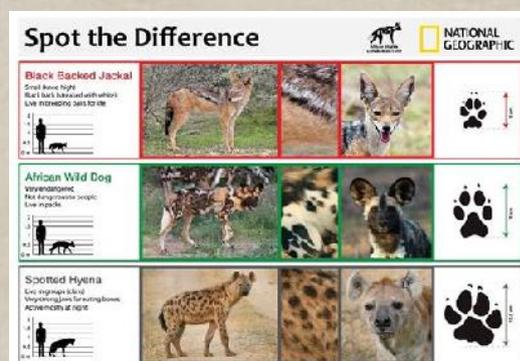
Partnering with neighbouring communities – investing in the future of wildlife.

Our **annual cluster competitions** are the highlight of the school year, and we were so grateful to have been able to go ahead with them during all the uncertainty of 2020. They are **incredibly exciting and effective, incentive based** competitions which encourage the students to engage with our conservation lessons and programs.



The 2020 cluster competitions were held in December and included 23 primary schools and 276 children, and was supported by over 200 members of the wider community!

In November 2020, we also **printed and distributed 1,000 educational posters detailing how to ‘Spot the Difference’ between African wild dogs, jackals and spotted hyena** to all our supported schools. This poster was developed upon request of the schools and after teachers’ feedback that students often confuse the predators, resulting in incorrect reports of human-wildlife conflict with African wild dogs.



“This water project is a blessing to us... Now that we have water, development is inevitable!”



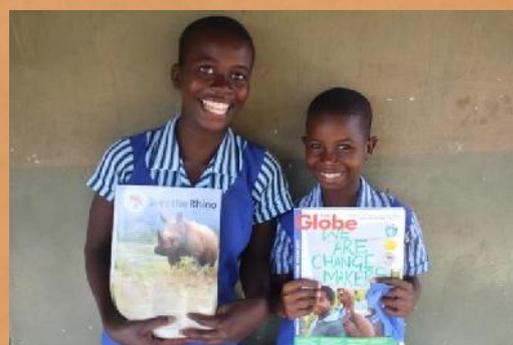
We could not have said it better than Mr Manhondo, Councillor from Ward 25.

With support from a very generous donor, AWCF supported the **provision of fresh running water to Muvava primary school and the surrounding community**. The project entailed laying piping and establishing a free-standing tank and pumping water from a borehole 3 km away from the school using a generator powered water pump. Beneficiaries for this project include Muvava school (including 750 students!), the clinic and all their patients, and about 120 households.

There is more to come!

Plans were thwarted due to the pandemic, but in the coming months we will be facilitating **vocational training for 8 ladies in Bikita District around SVC in the practice of garment making**. This initiative will empower the ladies and provide them the opportunity for gainful employment and to support their families!

Right: As soon as it is safe to do so, we will continue with **the second round of trainings for the [Peace & Changemakers Generation Project](#)** around GNP. AWCF is a partner to this project which aims to nurture the youth into responsible future community leaders and conservationists.



Have you heard? You can have your very own wild dog pack.

If you haven't already done so, **please go and have a look at our [brand new website](#)** – not only will you be able to get to know the AWCF team, and learn all about our multi-faceted and highly-effective programs, but you'll be provided with many avenues to consider promoting and supporting our work. The most popular is our **ADOPT A PACK CAMPAIGN...**

We have 4 packs for you to choose from, and for as little as US\$10 per month, you can help to save a species on the edge of extinction!

[ADOPT NOW](#)

Also an amazing gift – adopt for a friend or loved one on a special occasion.



Updates from the field – our scouts are hard at work!



Left: AWCF head scout, Rueben Bote, scrutinizes a predator track during our 2020 **annual carnivore spoor survey** in Savé Valley Conservancy.

We have carried out these surveys every year for the past 12 and 13 years in GNP and SVC, respectively. This work provides vital information to ecologists and management, and **helps to ensure that both protected areas continue to function as balanced and sustainable ecological units!**

And then the rains started...

It can be challenging to find African wild dogs at the best of times, but the unprecedented rainfall has made things particularly difficult for our scouts over the last couple of months, and tested their expert tracking skills. They continue to impress us!

Defeating heavy mud, uncrossable rivers, cheeky elephants, and grass as high as their waists, **our scouts will stop at nothing to find our resident packs** (and their new puppies!) and ensure that they are free from wires, and thriving!



Welcome back Nkosi, it's great to have you as part of the team.



Nkosilathi Ngwenya completed his Bachelor of Science (Hons) after living onsite with the AWCF team as a student for a year (2017/2018). **In July 2020 Nkosi came back to join our team** to assist with management, research and logistics. Nkosi is dedicated to furthering his studies and gaining work experience. Through our facilitation, he is now also currently the lead researcher on a project focused on the resident lions in Gonarezhou National Park. A project run by AWCF in partnership with the Gonarezhou Conservation Trust. **We believe very strongly in local capacity building and continue to invest in our students well after their attachment year with us.**

© Kim Wolhuter



Stay safe, stay home, stay healthy

We would like to express a genuine thank you to all of the organisations and the handful of private donors who so generously support our work.

Thanks to National Geographic; Painted Dog Conservation Inc, Australia; Educasa Foundation; Disney Conservation Fund; Frederick S. Upton Foundation; SAVE African Rhino Foundation; Trumbull Foundation; Zambezi Schoolbook Project; Bourke Family Foundation; Woodchester Trust; Cincinnati Zoo; Schwab Charitable Trust; Columbus Zoo and Aquarium; Charlbury & Overseas Community Projects; Arche Noah Foundation; Africa's Wild Dog Survival Fund; Painted Wolf Wines and TUSK Trust.

Thank you... We are very grateful to the Research Council of Zimbabwe for permission to conduct this work and to the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority for their support of our programs, and their permission to conduct the research in the Gonarezhou National Park. We would like to thank the entire Gonarezhou Conservation Trust team for a wonderful partnership and for their support. We thank the managers of the Savé Valley Conservancy for access to their properties for our work, and for their friendship. We are grateful to the Ministry of Education and local District Schools Inspectors for their support of our education work.

To unsubscribe from the AWCF mailing list, please email information@africanwildlifeconservationfund.org