



SANWILD

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2009

Our last newsletter is long overdue and we apologise to all our regular supporters and donors. 2009 has truly been a hectic and trying time for all at SanWild – animals and people included, but there have also been some amazing and inspiring stories.

The 1st good rains have fallen at SanWild and the birthing season for many species has started. We have been blessed with a large number of zebra foals already; including our logo zebra and also the two Growing Up Zebra mares called Shadow and Sky. Tshokwane has also given birth to a very small foal, but she is growing stronger by the day. Our small group of Gemsbok have a new member and so have our small group of eland.

**To ride an elephant and walk with lions –
the reality;**

Karen Trendler.

Many tourist destinations in Southern Africa advertise wildlife encounters “*Ride an elephant or walk with lions*”.

This sounds romantic and appeals to our desire to experience wildlife up close. But have you ever stopped to think of the reality of what happens to the animals in

order for you to have that intimate encounter with a wild and potentially dangerous animal? What happens to that particular animal when it can no longer be used commercially?

The commercial utilization is sold under the banner of conservation and education but exactly what conservation value is there in riding an elephant or walking with a lion and what do we really learn from these experiences?

Ecotourism has a huge role to play in conservation, job creation and economic development, but these activities should never compromise the animals or the environment.

Lion cubs are removed from the mother a couple of days after birth and hand raised so that they are tame enough to be used for tourism ventures.

The methods in which these unfortunate creatures are used normally include the following:

- Photographs with cute cubs.
- Astronomical adoption fees.
- Well-paying volunteer programs where volunteers are lied to normally kept under the impression that they are working in a conservation program aiding orphaned lion cubs.
- Profitable walks with humanized lions.

Seldom are these cubs genuine orphans and contrary to marketing 'blurb', walking with lions is not a part of release and



rehabilitation and certainly doesn't contribute to conservation of the species.



When the lion is too big or too dangerous to use anymore, they normally do end up in the canned lion hunting industry to either be hunted as a trophy or to breed more young for future hand raising and eventual hunting. It is a vicious circle from which there is no escape and the lions always end up paying with their lives.

An elephant is a highly intelligent, complex social animal with sophisticated communication skills, living and ranging over large distances in the wild. How can an animal of this size, strength and intelligence be used for riding like a domesticated horse?

Taming, training, chaining and absolute control and rigid discipline are the only means by which an elephant can be managed in order for you, as the tourist, to safely ride it.

Recently a local South African television program Carte Blanche and media carried headline stories of the successful

rehabilitation and release of wild caught, tamed, trained and traumatized elephant back into the wild.



The elephant, a group of ten were caught from the wild just over a year ago in Zimbabwe; youngsters forcibly removed from their herds and family groups, chained and beaten. (One died from stress related illness during the taming). ZNSPCA (Zimbabwean SPCA) and VierPfoten (Four Paws) stepped in to assist.

I was asked to manage the rehabilitation process and (not for the first time) came face to face with the realities of taming and training elephant. The training is designed to break the herd structure and natural bonds that will force a “Stockholm Syndrome” amongst the traumatized elephants. The scared and emotionally drained elephants will eventually bond with their keepers. Discipline is cruelly and strictly enforced through chaining, punishment, isolation and withholding food and water.

The rehabilitation of the group was a long slow process aimed at encouraging

normal herd bonding, removing the keepers control and discipline and giving the elephant the space and confidence to restore their natural instincts and normal elephant behaviour.

I am delighted to report that after months of hard work, the Sondelani elephants are now back in the wild, where they should be, without chains, saddles and keepers, contributing to conservation in their way and educating tourists about elephant in their natural environment live.

The pregnant matriarch will give birth to her calf in the wild.

Please do think before you ride an elephant or walk with a lion! You simply do not have any comprehension of the suffering that is associated with these magnificent creatures becoming your “slaves”.



Thanks to VierPfoten and the amazing team, ZNSPCA, NSPCA, Jessica and Roger Parry, Zimbabwe Parks Authority, Brett Gardner, Public Watch and SANWILD.

Rehab Courses:

Our wildlife rehabilitation training courses has grown from strength to strength. Karen Trendler has now moved to SanWild permanently and has taken up residence in the old farm house from where she will be instrumental in developing our information centre and wildlife rehabilitation training facility.

Course dates for 2010 has already been finalised. For more information and course dates please email Lizel Kachelhoffer on lizel@sanwild.org



Courses are designed to suit those interested in learning more about wildlife rehabilitation and also for those already in the field of wildlife veterinary medicine like veterinary nurses and vets themselves. You will get a great insight into the world

of a wildlife rehabilitator and will be able to make an informed decision if this is the field you would like to venture into.



Charity Mile and television adverts.

The Trust put SanWild forward as a participating charity in the Charity Mile horse race at Turfontein in Johannesburg. The horse allocated to SanWild, Captain Scot came in third and won R50 000.00 for our trust. Thanks to Tracey Cohen and her team for the opportunity. SanWild's 1st ever Television Commercial sponsored by The Trust also started running in November.

For more on The Trust visit their website at www.thetrust.co.za

Australian visit

Louise Joubert, our founder trustee was invited by the Humane Society International to a fundraiser hosted by Joan Pearson for SanWild on the 1st November 2009. A total of \$40 100.00 Australian dollars was raised by means of a charitable auction. SanWild would like to extend our sincere appreciation to

Verna Simpson, Michael Kennedy and the HSI team in Sydney. A special thank you also goes to Joan Pearson, a truly amazing woman.

Badger

A honey badger that was kept in a private zoo in Johannesburg was given a new lease on life when he was brought to SanWild for release back to the wild. This poor unfortunate creature has spent 6 years in isolation in a small cage where he was displayed to the public every day. Since his arrival at SanWild he is being kept in a large natural habitat enclosure with an ant heap. Within hours the badger had dug a deep burrow into the ant heap and has remained hidden away during daylight hours – exactly what a badger should be able to do. However he was “surprised” on a number of occasions exploring his new temporary home. He has even climbed up high into the Knob thorn tree inside the camp. What an immense change in lifestyle for this creature.



Hippo Sanctuary:

Funding to build a hippo sanctuary from where previously captive held hippos can

be returned to the wild was secured from the Foundation Brigitte Bardot. Upgrades, repairs and improvements have started on two large dirt dams that will form the core area from where hippos will be returned to the wild.

Two years ago two confiscated hippos called Tonga and Aldo were relocated to SanWild to start their new life as wild hippos. Both have been returned to the wild successfully and are doing well.

We will keep you updated on this project.



Porcupine Rescues:

A family of five “problem” porcupines was successfully relocated to the reserve from a small holding bordering Tzaneen. On this small holding the land owner grows vegetables crops as his main source of income. A family of porcupines living in a nearby field very quickly decided to cash in on the gourmet banquet and took to raiding the crops every night doing a lot of damage. Fortunately for the porcupine family the landowner was not keen to have them killed and opted to rather have them relocated. Over a period of four days we

managed to trap all the porcupines in the group and they were released after being kept in a temporary enclosure for a week to settle in first.

Rescued eland cows



Two eland cows were relocated to the larger reserve, but unfortunately the relocation company did not remove the pipes they put on the eland cows horns before they were released. Initially we had hoped that the pipes would come off on their own accord, but this was not to be and a rescue operation had to be launched to dart and remove the pipes off the cows' horns before the rainy season commenced. When pipes are left on antelopes horns the risk of rotting is very high and therefore the pipes need to be removed ASAP. The darting operation was done on two separate days and went off without any problems.

Bush babies by the dozen.

A large number of bush babies were received by our centre this year for hand

raising or treatment after they were attacked by cats or dogs. Weesie, a lesser bush baby is the smallest ever to be received.

The triplets (thick tailed bush babies) are simply the most adorable creatures you can ever hope to meet. They are doing very well and will eventually enter a soft release program that will see them released back to the wild.



Snared giraffe cow and calf:

In September 2009 we received an emergency email asking for help with a snared giraffe cow. The poor creature had been snared on her one front leg and according to the reports; the leg was very badly swollen and infected. Although the giraffe cow had broken free from the poacher's snare the steel cable remained around her leg and had cut deep into her flesh causing severe infection and pain.

Our team arrived at the Kondowe Conservancy on the Wednesday morning. We set out on foot to find the giraffe and

her very small calf. The cow was spotted on a number of occasions, but we simply could not get close enough to dart her and the rescue had to be called off until the Monday when a helicopter would be available to help with the rescue. We all realised that time was running out for both animals.

On the Friday night we received yet another call from the Kondowe management informing us that the cow had been seen close to a water hole during the day and that she had difficulty walking. The animal was clearly in great distress and life was slowly being drained from her body by the infection that had set into her leg. The concern was now for her very small calf. The Kondowe management had decided to rather end the cow's suffering and wanted us to come and capture the small calf for hand raising after which her mother would be put down. We were not keen to remove the calf and were not convinced yet that the cow needed to be put down, but we all realised that time was of the essence and that we could not wait for a helicopter any longer.

SanWild's team arrived at Kondowe early on the Saturday morning and once again we set out on foot; this time refusing spectators and bystanders to accompany the rescue team.

Within a short period the young calf was spotted with her mother close by. I was quite shocked at her condition; the calf had turned into a walking skeleton and even her mother's life could be saved, this

young calf was in serious trouble and would not survive for much longer. It was clear that her mother's milk had possibly dried up as a result of the snaring and infection or alternatively the cow could be in some much pain and discomfort that she refused to allow her calf to suckle. We managed to dart the small calf and she went down quite quickly, but within seconds her heart stopped and despite all our efforts to revive her, the calf sadly was simply too weak and died under anaesthetic.



Despite feeling terribly sad and angry (snares cause so much suffering) our efforts now turned to the calf's mother. She had to be found and none of us wanted to accept the possibility that she too may die on this dreadful day.

Earlier the Kondowe management indicated that it would be okay for us to destroy the cow and use the meat to feed the SanWild lions. All they wanted at this stage was to end the cow's suffering. However we decided against ending her life with a well placed rifle shot, but opted to rather dart her and only make the decision to put her down or treat her once we could observe her injury more closely.

From afar it did not look good; she was very cripple and her leg badly swollen. Infected blood was seeping from the wound. Within half an hour we managed to get a dart on the cow and our rangers kept up with the animal until she went down about 50 meters later. The team worked quickly to establish the damage. Our prayers were once again answered and to our absolute joy we realised that although the snare had done a lot of damage, once it was removed antibiotics could do the trick should we be able to get the cow back on her feet after being given the antidote to the immobilising drug. The cable snare was removed, the wound cleaned in record time, the antibiotics and antidote administered and then we all stood clear and moved away from the giraffe cow. Within minutes she was awake and it took only another couple of minutes and she was back up on her feet amongst cheers or joy and laughter from the team. Her chance of survival was now good and we only had to monitor her – there was enough food and water in her immediate vicinity and no large predators to present a danger.

As the cow slowly limped away our hearts mourned the death of the small calf, but over the years we have learnt and accepted that the sadness is part of the challenges of our type of work and that we had to accept that a greater God made the decisions and that we are only the instruments doing the best we possibly can under sometimes very difficult circumstances.

Two weeks after the rescue the cow was doing extremely well. She was walking on her leg again and by November had made a full recovery.

Serval and jackals.

A number of serval and jackal rescues took place this season. A very badly concussed serval arrived after it was hit by a motor vehicle. Fortunately it made a full recovery.



Another young serval arrived after it was caught in a bush fire and got burnt. Its injuries were not too bad and it will be released back to the wild once it is a bit bigger.

Two jackals hit by motor vehicles were rescued; one fell into a reservoir and almost drowned and a whole bunch of jackal pups arrived for hand raising. Fortunately all of them will be okay. The adults have already been released and the pups will remain at the centre until they have grown into adults and have completed their rehabilitation program that will see them return to the wild.



Caracals;

Two adult caracals were rescued this season; the one from a snare and the other after it got hurt when a farmer tried to capture the animal. Both were returned to the wild.

Vervet Monkey release project

The Humane Society International's vervet release project has been doing very well. The troop is almost ready for release. Three new babies have been born to the troop and we are just waiting for them to row a little stronger before the troop will take its first steps into the wild.

They will be monitored for at least a month to see how they are coping. We will keep you informed.

Other animal rescues:

So far a number of injured, traumatised or misplaced animals have been rescued and released into the reserve this year.

2 Brown Hyenas were relocated to SanWild after they were trapped as so-called "problem animals" that had resorted to attacking and killing a farmers lambs that is being kept in an enclosure close to his homestead.

An injured rock monitor was collected from the Tzaneen dam after it had managed to get itself trapped in an old rusted tin. After a tranquiliser was administered the tin was cut away. After treatment the rock monitor was released at SanWild within two weeks.

Two tawny eagles received surgery to repair broken wings and were released into the reserve. A third was treated for organic phosphate poisoning and released.

A fish eagle had a pin inserted into a broken leg and was successfully released to return to the wild after 8 weeks.

The six Egyptian geese hand raised by Ignus Bruins and donated to SanWild are still waiting for their feathers to grow out before they can fly off to a life in the wild.



Sugar, our hand raised zebra foal is fully weaned and is now put outside our yard for a couple of hours every day from where we hope she will eventually be accepted and be integrated into the wild herds. She has already started interacting with a kingship group and it is only a matter of time before she joins this group permanently. She has been observed playing and interacting with other young animals in the herd more or less her own age.

Bush Buck Fawn



The small bushbuck fawn that was almost cut to pieces by a tractor and slasher is doing great. He has been fully weaned and will soon be released to join Donald, the other young bushbuck male collected from Tzaneen almost 18 months ago after he was attacked by a predator, but not killed. Donald has been released for some time now, but still visits to play with old friends. The young one should have no problem keeping up with Donald and will be allowed to leave with him as soon as the veldt is looking better.

For the 1st time ever, SanWild's two bush camps will be available for the festive season. However bookings are limited to 8 people in the Savannah Camp and 8 people in Bukisa's camp and should you be interested in spending Christmas and New Year at SanWild please do contact Lizel Kachelhoffer ASAP to secure your booking. Reservations are accepted on a 1st come 1st served basis.

Rates from the 15th December 2009 to the 10th January 2010.

Savannah's Private Bush Camp = R1350 per person per night fully inclusive of 3 meals and Christmas dinner. Daily game drive included. Camp can accommodate 8 – 10 people, DSTV, rock pool, honesty bar.

Bukisa's Private Bush Camp = R5000 per night for the entire camp accommodating 8 people. Daily game drive included. Rock pool and DSTV in main lounge.

THE SANWILD LION PRIDES:

Life at SanWild for the lion prides is pretty peaceful; the food is good and plentiful and the respective prides have all the social interaction with their own kind and families to keep them satisfied and emotionally fulfilled.

Pride members however are oblivious to the difficulties experienced by people in the small office close by who face a daily and very stressful challenge to raise the

funding necessary to continue to keep the lion prides content and well cared for.

Saved from South Africa's infamous canned lion hunting and breeding industry in 2003 the SanWild lions are extremely fortunate. Hundreds of other living, breathing and majestic lions have met a painful and horrible death and all that remain of these magnificent creatures are the trophy hunting photographs on numerous hunting outfitter websites and their lifeless bodies that have been stuffed and mounted to remind a cowardly hunter of his own supposed "bravery".

Earlier this year we put out a desperate appeal for donor funding to continue to take care of and feed the SanWild lions. The worldwide financial crisis impacted heavily on our donor funding and we were faced with the horribly reality of simply not having enough funding to feed the 16 lions in our care. Euthanasia of the lions became a horrible possibility we had to consider.

While we searched desperately for alternatives another unfortunate reality was that it was highly unlikely that we would be able to secure other safe homes where the lions would be given the same quality of care, large natural habitat enclosure and would be safe from exploitation. South Africa had become a very dangerous place for captive lions and exploitation and cruel deaths of many lions are a daily occurrence.

Although the constant struggle to find sufficient funding has been very trying, stressful and demoralising at times; your support, words of encouragement and financial contributions has kept us strong and focused and despite all the odds being stacked against the SanWild lions they are still here; enjoying their own little place in the sun.

Your kind hearted love for animals and your financial support have ensured that sufficient funding was raised to continue their care and have ensured that the lions received regular and good quality food for the last couple of months.

Continued support and a substantial donation from the Foundation Brigitte Bardot earlier this year has also helped us to continue to look after the SanWild lions.

However we have now again reached a point in time where we urgently need to ask for your help again to ensure that we can urgently raise enough funding to continue to ensure the welfare of Jespha, Lutalo and Prince's prides.

We would be extremely grateful for your continued support and financial donations as this is the only way we can manage to keep to our undertaking to ensure their welfare and give them all the love in the world they did not find elsewhere.

Hopefully the international crisis will soon be over and life will become a lot easier and pleasant for man and animal, but for now we would be grateful if you can find it

in your heart to once again make a small contribution to this appeal? All donations are appreciated and from past experience we have learnt that in time of crisis; it is the combined effect of smaller donations that can truly make the difference between life and death.

As a registered non-profit organisation and NGO, SanWild receives no government funding and are totally reliant of the generosity of the public for charitable donations.

The good news is that we have now also been approved and registered by the South African revenue service in respect of Section 18A on the income tax exemption act. This means that all donations now made to SanWild are tax deductible under South Africa tax laws.

On-line donations can be made via our website www.sanwild.com by going to the SPONSOR/DONATE Page and by using the drop down box to find FEED THE SANWILD LIONS. Alternatively direct internet banking transfers or direct deposits can be made into our trust account at ABSA Tzaneen. Account number 9111221180, Branch Code 334349. The swift code for international transfers is ABSAZAJJ.

For more information please email louise@sanwild.org or lizel@sanwild.org
Contact telephone numbers +27 (0) 833103882.

Maranda Mining Company Pty Ltd –

The continued threat of open cast mining in the reserve remains a threat to many wild animals, but we have by no means decided to throw in the towel and allow Maranda's activities result in the death and injury of especially the smaller creatures one does not see every day and to also irrevocably damage and destroy the natural beauty of SanWild forever.

In June this year we lost an appeal court ruling when we appealed against an earlier ruling in the high court that granted Maranda an interdict giving them access to SanWild to commence their mining activities.

The court accepted that the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) had applied their minds and did their job properly when they evaluated the application and EMP (Environmental Management Plan) submitted by Maranda Mining Company to obtain a permit to mine in the sanctuary. The court therefore ruled in the favour of the mine granting them an interdict to prevent us interfering with their mining activities. Since then Maranda has been preparing their intended mining site and have acted outside their EMP by cutting down a number of trees not included in their submissions to DME.

SanWild was also granted a meeting with the Minister of Minerals and Energy's office, but sadly we have to report that all that this meeting resulted in was for us to realise that the DME like so many other

government departments in South Africa have become dysfunctional with officials not applying their minds and not doing their jobs in a prescribed manner. Sad, but true.

Maranda obtained a mining permit on an inaccurate and very flimsy EMP, but this amateurish submission was passed by the Regional Manager in DME and a permit was granted to Maranda Mining Company without any consultation with SanWild as the occupier of the land and interested and affected party.

After the court ruling Maranda's directors became extremely arrogant and claimed repeatedly that the court ruled in their favour and that they had proved their bona fides beyond doubt as the court ruled in their favour. This was not the case at all.

The court purely dealt with the access to the property and as the court presumed that DME did follow correct procedures and had applied their minds when issuing the permit, the court upheld the interdict in Maranda's favour and ruled against us.

SanWild lodged our own urgent legal application in the High Court in October 2009 to ask the court to instruct DME to rule on our three internal appeals of which the 1st had been lodged more than a year ago; alternatively asking the court to overturn the mining permit on the basis that no consultation were entered into with SanWild and that due process was not followed before the permit was issued by DME.

In November the judge refused us an urgent interdict as he felt that SanWild could claim compensation should we suffer any damages and that the decision to suspend the operations should rest with the Department of Minerals and Energy.

Sadly Judge Murphy failed to understand that not everybody in life can find solace in monetary compensation and that the Department of Minerals and Energy have failed to act on our numerous requests, internal appeals and correspondence.

Again the Maranda Mining Company director Michael Bryant resorted to telling various media sources that the court again ruled in their favour. He once again misled the local media who were not informed that the court date to evaluate and rule on the main application will be set down for 2010.

We will keep you posted. To be kept up to date on the progress please join our Facebook Group – Save the SanWild Wildlife Sanctuary
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=102811551632&ref=ts>

CONTACT DETAILS

Tel: +27 (0) 0153187900/1

Mobile +27 (0) 833103882

Websites: www.sanwild.org and

www.sanwild.com

Email: sanwild@pixie.co.za or

louise@sanwild.org