



Botswana
Predator
Conservation
Trust



Botswana Predator Conservation Trust

Private Bag 13 Maun, Botswana

info@bpctrust.org

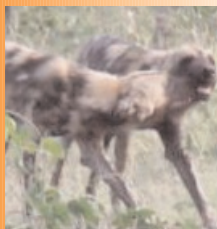
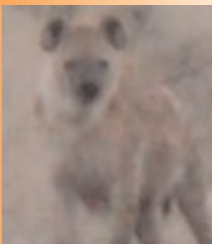
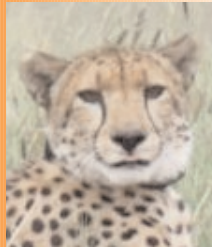
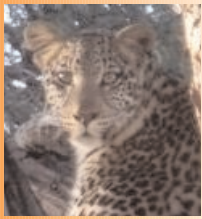
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Continuing Our Outreach Locally and Internationally



The Botswana Predator Conservation Trust has recently been hosting a number of small events with notable participation. In early June, we kicked off our human-wildlife conflict program with a workshop in Shorobe village. We organized the workshop to address topics that local farmers were most concerned about. Guest speakers from government agencies, non-government organizations and our own research team discussed issues around predator conflict and problem alleviation.

On June 15th, We hosted Princes William and Harry in our rustic field camp for one night during their 2010 tour to Africa. The trip, organized by Tusk Trust, was designed highlight their personal charity work and support England's 2018 bid for the World Cup. As Prince William is the Royal Patron of Tusk and the president of the English FA, we were honored to introduce them to the field program as well as the other BPCT projects during their stay. Although hosting the princes was an honor we won't soon forget, it was not the first time for William to visit our proj-

ect as he spent a day with Tico some ten years ago when William was visiting projects in Africa during his gap year. Harry as well has spent substantial amounts of time in Botswana and in particular around the Okavango Delta. Although this was in some ways a business trip, the princes had an opportunity to relax in camp before making more public appearances the following day.



Prince Harry was on a tight schedule, leaving early on the morning of the 16th to Lesotho. William, however, spent time in the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation biochemistry laboratory to learn about the bioboundary program before attending the official launch of the 2010 Coaching for Conservation program at the Maun stadium. We were also honored to have Lucas Radebe, the ambassador of FIFA for South Africa on hand for the kick off. The participants were entertained by Joe Jonas, of the group the Jonas Brothers, who showed his support for our program by performing a few songs for the crowd and interacting with the local children. With such high profile guests, we received international media attention for C4C just as the camp began in early July!

We have also seen interesting shifts in the movements of the local lion prides, a leopard cub gains independence and the dogs have suc-

This newsletter was prepared by BPCT founder/ directors Dr. Tico McNutt and Lesley Boggs with contributions by Dr. Andrew Stein, Gabriele Cozzi, Femke Broekhuis, & Olefile Sebogiso.

BPCT DUAL MISSION:

First, to use rigorous scientific inquiry to acquire essential knowledge regarding the behavioral ecology and communication systems of the African wild dog, cheetah, leopard, lion and spotted hyena and to apply this knowledge to promote solutions for the preservation of Africa's large predators and their habitats.

Second, to link conservation and environmental issues to decision making in the ongoing development of rural Botswana.

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Insurance Compensation Scheme

Human Wildlife Conflict Workshop

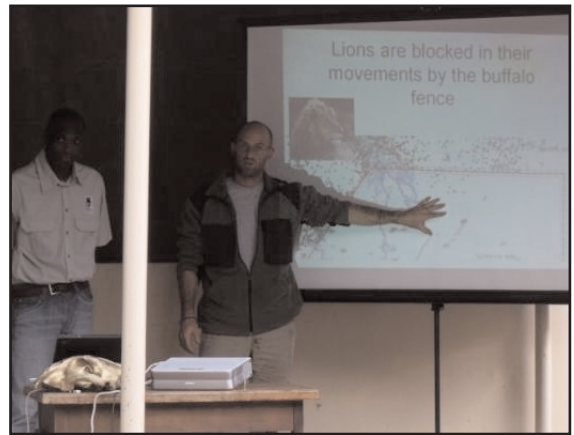
As part of our continuing our efforts to launch a new Insurance Compensation Scheme in the region, On June 1st and 2nd, the Botswana Predator Conservation Trust (BPCT) held a human-wildlife conflict workshop in Shorobe. The purpose of this workshop was to address concerns villagers had about livestock production, conflict with predators, poison and disease. After an initial visit to all 73 cattle posts, BPCT put together a small group of speakers that addressed the primary concerns of livestock farmers in the region that included members of our team, government officials and members of Botswana NGOs including Cheetah Conservation Botswana and Birdlife Botswana. The workshop was attended also by the community headman and the district counselor, who both presided over the event.

The turn-out for the workshop was strong with more than 70 people attending each day. Since the workshop was held in the village center, there was concern that many of the participants would not be cattle post owners, but over 75% of the cattle posts were represented at the meeting (55 of 73). These farmers that attended participated fully, asking questions about predator identification, husbandry practices, livestock health and ecology of the most commonly blamed predator- the spotted hyena.



Workshop participant listening intently

One of the primary focuses of the workshop was to introduce a new livestock insurance scheme created by the BPCT. This insurance scheme is designed to provide an alternative to the unpopular government run compensation program. There are many differences and new ideas however, so there was need to outline the new approach to gain support through this workshop.



Workshop organizer Olefile Sebogiso and speaker Gabriele Cozzi present information on lion movements

Structure of the new Insurance Compensation Scheme:

- Farmers are required to invest a small, token premium in the insurance program- 1% of the value of the livestock owned- to inspire a sense of value in the program.
- Farmers are expected to use specific husbandry practices- predator-proof kraals, vaccinated guard animals and herders- to qualify for the program.
- A committee, made up of community members, member of BPCT research team and Officials from Department of wildlife will hear claims and allocate compensation funds based on merit and risk. Claims where cattle post owners employ good husbandry practices and where the predator is not killed, will be paid out in full.
- All larger predators will be compensated for, unlike the current government compensation program that only compensates for losses incurred by lions, leopard and hyena- and excludes wild dog and cheetah.
- Finally, the pay out will be substantially more (up to 85% as opposed to 10-15%) than the current compensation program.

Although there were at first mixed feelings, farmers became more interested as the workshop went on asking detailed and pointed questions about the structure, claims process and payouts. The concern about farmer financial investment in the program was quickly dispatched as many farmers stated that the premium was reasonable considering the benefits returned with accepted claims.

The BPCT has launched its farmer outreach program with initial cattle post visits and culminating with the workshop. In the coming months our detailed cattle post survey will be completed, smaller workshops will be held at clusters of cattle posts to follow-up on the information presented in the village and a committee will be formed for outlining the final details of the insurance program.

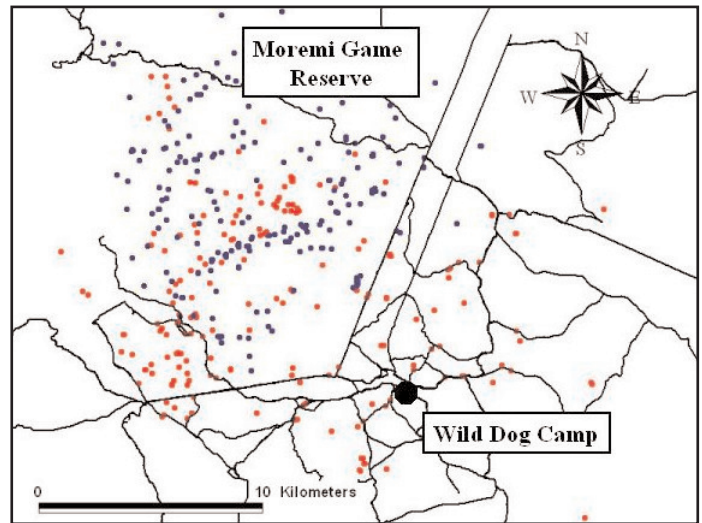
Shift in Male Lion Movements

In 2007 there was a take over in the tenureship of the male lions in the Santawani Pride. Two adult males, Rossi and his coalition mate were defending the pride. After his mate was shot by hunters, Rossi was at a disadvantage and was eventually found dead along the veterinary cordon fence. An influx of males occurred within the area. A coalition of males, Nick and Hayden, were seen frequently within a km of camp, in the middle of the Santawani territory. Then another coalition, Mike and Doohan were seen and eventually claimed the pride for themselves. From then Mike and Doohan spent most of their time with the females of the Santawani pride, mating with 6 of the available 7 females. Their territory extended from the south



Mike, one of the Santawani Pride Males

gate road to the north down to the cordon fence to the south. As the Santawani females started producing cubs in 2008, Mike and Doohan appeared to be shifting their territory to the north and west overlapping partially with the Mogogelo and S Pan prides. Based on data from studies in other areas, this is not entirely unexpected. Males commonly associate with more than one pride of females. There are many reasons for these shifts 1) competing males push them out 2) and 3) the males seek other areas for no foreseen reason. The Santawani pride has produced 15 cubs in the last 2.5 years, most likely sired by Mike and Doohan. Eleven of these cubs have survived. The females have not mated since giving birth, but they will most



Map of male lion movements- dotted lines for 2009 and solid lines for 2010.

likely become receptive soon. In the meantime, Doohan and Mike have ventured farther afield, well into the territory of the Xini pride, associating with several females there. The pride males in Xini, Ghost and Darkness, have been with the pride since we have started studying the Moremi prides. With the absence of Mike and Doohan, several males have ventured into the heart of their former territory. Barros, a male that we have been tracking since late 2007, has made more regular forays deep into the Santawani pride area, associating with females and confidently roaring. Initially, Mike and Doohan would dispatch Barros, yet these confrontations have not happened in recent months. A coalition of two young males have also appeared in recent months, spending most of their time along the periphery of the Santawani pride territory, but roaring as well and challenging Barros in battles at the foot of our camp, keeping the research team awake and alert on several nights in early May. Still, Mike and Doohan seem aloof to these intrusions, possibly lured by greener pastures and receptive females in other prides. For their part, the Santawani females have also shifted their range slightly north, although not to the extent of the males. Individual females have received Barros without aggression and allowed him to mate. In the following months, we hope to uncover the complex associations and movements of the male lions in the area.

Cub Is Independent

Amelia gave birth in March/ April 2009. Although we were unable to determine the number of cubs at birth, soon sightings of a young female were confirmed. Amelia had given birth to cubs in 2008, but they had not survived. This is a common problem for the leopards in our area. Of the cubs birthed to collared females, only this cub has been successfully raised to independence, a rate of only 17%. Since leopards are so secretive, we have to use indirect evidence for determining cub survivorship. For example, when a female gives birth, her territory is reduced to approximately 5 km² for the first several weeks. We are able to investigate these areas and conduct intensive follows to get our first glimpse of the cubs. If we can not see the cubs, we look for tracks in the area or set motion sensor cameras at suspected den sites in warthog holes or hollow trees. Often this yields our first sightings. We are particularly careful not to disturb these sites. In the following months, we only get short glimpses of the cubs occasionally, sometimes with weeks between sightings. If after a couple weeks the female returns to pre-birthing movements or we have not seen further evidence of the cubs, we suspect that they have been killed by lions, hyenas or leopards. Females will often start mating soon after losing cubs.



Amelia's cub at a few months old & at independence (inset)

Amelia started mating again when the cub was nearly 1 year old. The cub was last seen in August, very relaxed with the vehicle, stalking impala nearly 1.5 years old. Since female cubs inhabit a portion of their mother's territory, we hope to watch her become a successful mother over the next several years.

Precarious Den Site Choices

The 2010 denning season was a success, despite a questionable choice of densite for the Matthews pack. They survived, and have eleven remaining pups, more than any other pack in the area. In May, Chinca, the dominant female of the Matthews pack, which typically traverses the concession around our camp in relative protection, decided to den south of the veterinary cordon fence. This area is known for the communal subsistence farming activities and the paucity of wild prey. Since the activity of the dogs is far more localized during the 3 month denning period, there was potential for the dogs to decimate local livestock to support the growing pups that occur in litters as large as 13. The Matthews Pack hunt their natural prey north of the fence thereby avoiding potential conflict with farmers. We had to work particularly hard with farmers of the Shorobe area, where the dogs were denning, to maintain civil relations before the dogs are able to move greater distances as the pups grow and emerge from the den.

A second pack of dogs had taken over an old spotted hyena den near Khwai village. This den-site was located on a primary road for traffic from the Savuti area to Moremi's North Gate. Tico received a report about this den from concerned tour operators, who felt that many self-guided tourists, without knowledge of the sensitivity of the denning period for wild dogs, had created new roads that completely surround the den for maximum disturbance to the pack. Denning dogs, once sufficiently disturbed, can abandon a den and the pups, leaving the litter behind or losing



Pups at the Den

some in the move. We were concerned that the dogs need

ed assistance. 'Face' Sango, one of our program research assistants, set up a meeting with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks officials at Moremi's North Gate and community escort guides to close off several access roads to the den and establish guidelines for viewing the den. We hope that tourists in the future will gain an appreciation for the dogs from a respectful distance, especially during this sensitive denning period.

New Land Rover



As part of the royal visit, Prince William handed over the keys to a brand new Land Rover TDI to Tico. The donation, orchestrated by Charlie Mayhew, CEO of Tusk Trust, was made possible by a generous donation from Paul Farmer and Deborah Meadon together with support from Landrover, The David Pleydell-Bouveirie Memorial Fund, and Cycle of Life. We are delighted. The new vehicle compliments our fleet of 7 landrovers (circa 1990) used for field research. Our vehicles take a lot of punishment during the course of our everyday tracking through deep sand, mud and over and around stumps and logs. The addition of this new vehicle will do much to alleviate our constant vehicle issues

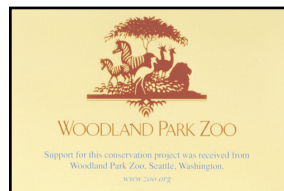
Research Team News

Andrew Stein was invited to participate in a work shop to estimate the national population of leopards in Namibia. This workshop was initiated by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, bringing together researchers working on leopards from around the region.

Femke Broekhuis attended a three week course on ecological research techniques in Poland.

We are currently looking for potential Master's and PhD students for our intraguild study. Candidates must submit a C.V. and potential research ideas and must be able to financially support themselves in the field. Please send materials to predatorconservation@gmail.com

Acknowledgements



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www.wildentrust.org- our U.S. registered charity.

www.bpctrust.org- our Botswana Program website