

# *Anne K. Taylor Fund*

## 2001 YEAR END SUMMARY FOR COMMUNITY BASED CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN THE MASAI MARA

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### *MISSION STATEMENT*

*The Anne K. Taylor Fund was created by A.K. Taylor International to encourage and assist individuals, communities and corporations to conserve, protect and restore biodiversity through sound economic activities that are ecologically sustainable.*

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### **UPDATE**

During the last year A. K. Taylor International has developed what was originally a wildlife rescue fund into a fully- fledged multifaceted organization, supported to a large extent by A. K. Taylor International, Born Free Foundation, Youth for Conservation, Friends of Conservation and Amara. We have also received donations from tour operators, friends and clients and thank everyone for supporting us so generously. After several years of work in the Masai Mara, some carefully designed assessment projects and numerous meetings with the various stakeholders in the region, we have developed a comprehensive program to address conservation issues in and around the Masai Mara. We believe community education and participation in our projects are vital to the success of conservation work in the Masai Mara.

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE MASAI MARA**

The Masai Mara forms the northern extension of the vast Serengeti - Mara ecosystem and is home to one of the last great wildlife migrations on earth. In 1961, the Reserve was brought under the direct control of the Narok County Council and its borders extended east of the Mara River to encompass 1,813 square kilometers to form what is now the Masai Mara Game Reserve. In 1995, control of the Reserve was divided between the Narok and TransMara County Councils. Unlike the National Parks in Kenya, which are run by the government, the Masai Mara is a National Reserve, held in trust by the local district councils. To effect the management of the Reserve, there has been a need to generate revenue, regulate the use of the reserve area between the local communities and wildlife and harmonize the traditional ways of people's livelihood, tourism and new concepts in conservation.

This June the TransMara District Council took a bold step and devolved the management of their sector to a non-profit company called the Mara Conservancy. The Mara Conservancy is now in charge of the management of Mara Triangle and in only a few months we have seen positive changes in the level of poaching activity within the Mara triangle, in the motivation and professionalism in the rangers and wardens, and in the condition of the roads and buildings.

As a nonpolitical nonprofit organization we strive to work in cooperation with the various stakeholders in the Masai Mara region. We have a good working relationship with the Government Minister from this area, senior council members, wardens and rangers, tourist companies and operators, community elders and school committees and other NGO's, such as Friends of Conservation and The Mara Conservancy.

## A NEW THREAT TO AFRICA'S WILDLIFE

In the past few decades poaching for ivory and rhino horn have devastated populations of elephant and rhino all over Africa. Kenya has often led the African nations in their battle against poaching. Currently a new form of poaching (**the commercial bushmeat trade**) threatens the existence of the large plains animals and many other species all over Africa. For further information about the bushmeat crisis please visit [www.bushmeat.org](http://www.bushmeat.org). This website explains where this current crisis is taking place and what is being done to stop this problem. Our project is listed on this site as one of the few working against this fairly new problem that threatens the continued survival of wildlife in Kenya.

## OBJECTIVES OF OUR WORK

### 1. ANTIPOACHING PATROLS

- Provide assistance to the local County Council rangers, Mara Conservancy, Kenya Wildlife Service and the surrounding communities for antipoaching patrols.
- Remove snares from the forest and riverine habitats.
- Determine snaring hotspots and document poaching incidents.
- Recheck known poacher camps from past visits to determine their level of activity.
- Act as a deterrent to poaching activity by having a presence in areas not frequently visited by tourists or reserve authorities.
- Document animals killed by poachers.

### 2. WILDLIFE RESCUES

- When possible rescue animals found with human induced injuries.

### 3. COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAM

- Provide support to the schools in the community in order to help develop the trust and confidence of the local Maasai communities.
- Conduct children and teacher wildlife conservation educational programs at local schools in the community.
- Employ local Maasai on our projects to further develop community awareness and support of wildlife conservation initiatives.
- Support local initiatives and work conducted by the newly formed Youth for Conservation branch in the Masai Mara.

### 4. DEVELOP REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO ADDRESS THE BUSHMEAT TRADE

- Create interest and support in wildlife conservation from other tour operators and tourist facilities in the region.
- Work in cooperation with other NGO's to further our goals of wildlife conservation.
- Educate tourists visiting the region as to the problem of the bushmeat trade and potential solutions.

## RESULTS OF PROJECTS IN 2001

### I. ANTIPOACHING PATROLS

- This year we were able to complete 6 (two-week duration) antipoaching patrols. These patrols began with a focus in the middle of the TransMara reserve uncovering numerous large permanent poachers' camps within the reserve. We also found much poaching activity along the Tanzanian/Serengeti border which is an area rarely visited by tourists. We destroyed the camps and rechecked them on each project insuring that the poachers did not return. In these camps we confiscated hundreds of pounds of dried meat, skins, 395 snares, spears and arrows and assisted in the arrest of 10 poachers.



Antipoaching patrol along the Kenya/Tanzania border.

- In the poachers' camps and from evidence from field patrols we documented a total of 117 animals killed by poachers. Scientific estimates of the number of animals killed each year by poachers in the Serengeti/Mara ecosystem range over 20,000. Obviously our findings are just a glimpse of the actual number of animals killed each year by poachers. What is interesting to note from these numbers is the range of different species killed. *The list includes (8 hippo, 12 impala, 26 zebra, 5 warthog, 8 eland, 1 dik dik, 1 ostrich, 3 hyena, 3 topi, 2 waterbuck, 20 wildebeest, 5 buffalo, 12 lions, 1 leopard, 5 giraffe, and 4 elephant).* Snaring is an indiscriminate form of poaching and results in the death of many non-target species such as lions, leopards, hyenas and elephant.
- When the Mara Conservancy took over management of the TransMara region we turned our patrol efforts to the surrounding group ranches, the Koiyake-Lemek region and the Narok side of the Mara reserve. These areas provide critical buffer zones to the TransMara area. We found the level of poaching in these regions just as high as when we first began our patrols in the TransMara region. Hopefully with a continued presence next year we can cause a significant decline in this activity.

- A startling discovery was the number of lions (12 documented) that were killed.
- This year we documented 7 elephants with trunks cut from snares. This makes their survival very difficult as they have trouble feeding. They tend to use their feet to assist in feeding and will also feed in gullies where they can browse or graze more easily.



7 Elephants confirmed with severed trunks

## 2. WILDLIFE RESCUES



Last year we were able to coordinate the rescue of 3 lions, 2 giraffe and 3 elephant. This year these numbers were lower – a trend which we hope will continue, as long as we keep a presence in the region. We assisted with 2 lion rescues and 1 elephant. This lion was suffering from an ever tightening snare. Once the snare was removed and the wound treated this lion successfully recovered.

## 3. COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

- We now sponsor 3 schools totaling over 600 children. After holding meetings with the communities and the school boards we determined the most pressing needs for the schools. This year we delivered and installed 3 large water tanks and gutters to catch

rain water so that the children will have clean drinking water while at school. In addition we provided text books for all classes at two of the schools.



Anne and Maasai friend from Kawai.

We feel community involvement and support is vital to the success of our project. Our relationship with the local communities continues to strengthen with the employment of young Maasai men who now join our patrols with the team. They have brought considerable knowledge of the region and are learning many different skills from the more experienced team members. In addition they are able to provide insight into what is occurring when the team is absent between projects. They have been so enthusiastic that they started their own Youth for Conservation branch in the Maasai Mara.

Our educational talks at the school cover wildlife conservation topics and the importance of wildlife and tourism. We often end these talks with game drives into the reserve for the school children to learn about the game that is just at their front door but rarely seen.

The children in the community have responded well to their classes in wildlife conservation. Many actually bring in snares that they find while walking to and from school and watching their families' livestock on the weekends. We are excited by their interest and hope to continue fostering this good working relationship with the school children and the community.

School field trip led by our antipoaching team.



#### 4. DEVELOP REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO ADDRESS THE BUSHMEAT TRADE

- We have met with the tour operators and camp managers in the Masai Mara to gain their support for the work we are doing and the needed cooperation of their drivers and guides in keeping an open eye and reporting sightings of illegal activity. We have received assistance from some of the camps in the form of vehicles for school field trips, wildlife

rescues, meals and vehicle maintenance. Special thanks to Governors Camp, Little Governor's Camp, Olonana, Kichwa Tembo and Serena Lodges.

- We educate the clients from A.K. Taylor International as to the serious threat the bushmeat trade has for Africa's wildlife and what is being done to address the problem. We hope to develop a program for special presentations to tourist groups interested in conservation issues in Africa.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

A major decline in tourism due to the terrorism at the World Trade Center has put an ever tightening squeeze on funds available for wildlife conservation. Kenya is very dependent on tourist revenues to protect wildlife resources that the world values and uses. It is amazing the effect a single action can have around the globe, the number of human lives that are changed and the ensuing environmental consequences. We are pleased with what we have been able to accomplish with the help of so many. In 2002 we hope to do much more and plan to expand our projects even further into the surrounding areas and communities of the Masai Mara.



We look forward to a new year, thank all those many friends and organizations that have supported us, and hope you will continue to share in our passion to help protect one of the last great wilderness places on earth.

Please make donation checks out to Friends of Conservation:

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A special thanks to Friends of Conservation for assistance in distributing our funds. 100% of the donations with Anne K. Taylor reference are distributed to the Anne K. Taylor Fund.