

March 24, 2010



## **ANNE KENT TAYLOR'S UPDATE FROM KENYA**



**AKTF Team on Patrol – Photo by Devon McCleary**

Hello from Kenya:

I hope this email finds each of you well. I have been in Kenya since early January and most of my time has been spent in the Masai Mara working on the many projects that the Anne K. Taylor Fund is involved in. I have just returned to Nairobi (and my computer!) and wanted to give you an update of what has been happening at this end! I know that Kenya is close to the hearts of many of you - as is our work in the Mara which so many of you generously support. I wish you could be here with me!

As many of you know from previous newsletters, the University of Illinois National Soybean Research Lab has generously sponsored the pilot school feeding program in the Oloomongi and Pusangi schools in the Mara. It was my utmost pleasure to spend time with Bridget Owen (who sadly was unable to join us in the Mara), Nick Scates and Pascasie Adedze from NSRL during their short time here, and to thank them personally for helping to get this program off to such a tremendous start.

While Bridget, Nick and Pascasie were in Nairobi, Carol Kiugo, Rolf Campbell and Donnie Harris from Insta Products (who provide the fully nutritional Insta porridge for the children) and Elias, the Anne K. Taylor Fund Team Leader, organized a well attended workshop which was most informative. The workshop was on the value of soya beans and Insta porridge (which contains soya meal along with all the essential amino acids required for a balanced diet) used by AKTF in our school feeding program. A big thank you goes to them! There were several very interesting presentations and a good exchange of thoughts and ideas. The following day we went to the Mara to visit the schools to see how the children were progressing. It is remarkable to see what a difference supplemental nutrition makes to their health, both physically and mentally and how this has been well noted by the community. It is possible that the U of I support may end at the completion of this school year (as they only originally committed to a six month trial period, but kindly increased their support into 2010) so we would like to thank them for making such a difference in the lives of these children.

We are anxious to keep the project going and extend it to other schools and hope that we can find other supporters to help us do so. I am exploring ways to see if it is viable for the communities to contribute towards the feeding program. This is not easy for them because ready cash is not available, however, we will do our best to find a way forward! It would be so very sad for everyone, especially the children, if we were unable to continue due to financial constraints. Should any organization or individual be interested in supporting the feeding program please let me know and I can send more financial details.

During the course of several days we were able to de-worm thousands of Masai community members - men, women and children. This operation was overseen by Carol Kiugo from Insta Products along with my Anne K. Taylor Fund Team who helped with the distribution. It has been, and will continue to be, a Herculean task which will result in better health for all those who were treated. GlaxoSmithKline were most generous in providing us with the medicine at a reduced cost. This will be an ongoing project as parasites are a serious problem in these communities.

The AKTF Team has been very active - a couple of weeks ago they caught six poachers and, working with the local police authorities, confiscated a lorry which was being used to transport bushmeat and illegal charcoal out of the Mara. We also managed to remove snares from a couple of elephants, which had the snares biting deeply into their flesh along with a zebra with a snare around its neck which, to my relief, had not yet tightened. The elephants were suffering terribly and I cannot tell you the relief I feel now that the snares have been removed and they will heal.



**Removing Snares from Elephant and Zebra – Photos by Elias Kamande AKTF**

This exercise was not without its "excitement" as in both cases the matriarchs were extremely protective of their injured youngsters. As I generally have to fly a vet in from Nairobi to take care of injured animals, it is hard to predict where the animal will be once the vet arrives as they can travel for many miles, without limping, even when their legs are almost severed. One rescue was particularly challenging as the injured elephant disappeared into the forest one half hour before the vet arrived from Nairobi (Brian Heath kindly gave him a "lift" in his small plane as I was unable to obtain space on the regular flight to the Mara) and was not to be seen again until I returned to the Mara two weeks later.

We were, however, informed that there was another injured elephant which was spotted by Willy of Kichwa Tembo Camp who sat with the elephant until we arrived (it is wonderful to have the co-operation of these dedicated driver/guides) close to dark, which was not ideal, but we could not risk losing the injured elephant by waiting until the next day. Thus the Kenya Wildlife Service vet, Dr. Edward Kariuki, decided to continue with the rescue attempt, darting the elephant successfully - after which the "fun" started! We were in an open Kichwa Tembo Camp vehicle (not ideal with those enormous angry beasts within feet of us!) driven by Benedict Kalalui who was extremely brave under grave threat! The AKTF Team and Kimojino, from the Mara Conservancy, were in our tiny Suzukis - and they looked even tinier with the elephants so close and angry!

As the matriarchs charged us, we in turn had to not withdraw, revving our engines, honking our horns, to "turn them" in order to allow us to work on the now-sedated elephant. The elephants were charging and trumpeting and we had to equal or better their threats (or we would have been toast!). Finally we were successful and they wheeled away leaving us to do our work in the dark!



**Working in the dark! Photo by Elias Kamande**

The zebra took five hours as she did not want to succumb to the tranquilizing drug and took off at a gallop with us in close pursuit. We did not want to lose her in the forest as, had she then gone down without us there, she would not have survived. Finally we were successful and the snare was removed - two more snared zebras have been reported by the community but we have not been able to find them again. So frustrating but perhaps they succumbed.

The second elephant rescue exhibited some amazing behavior which proves the intelligence and emotional depth of these magnificent animals. As mentioned earlier, this young male had disappeared for two weeks and miraculously on the day I got back to the Mara he was spotted again (in the interim all the camp drivers, my team and rangers were mobilized looking for him). Sadly it was too late that day to fly the vet in from Nairobi but I organized for him to come in the next morning hoping that the elephant would not, once again, go missing during the night. My prayers were answered and he was spotted once again the following morning by Kimojino - vehicles were posted to stay with him until the vet arrived, as the elephants were moving fast towards the thick forest. Thankfully everything worked like clockwork and Dr. Dominic Mijele, was able to dart this young elephant before it, once again, disappeared.

Once the young bull was darted and started getting groggy, the matriarchs supported him on each side knowing he was in trouble. Once the drugs took effect and he went down all hell broke loose - the young bull's mother and others tried to raise him with their trunks, tusks, legs...all the while trumpeting their distress. The others, not realizing we were trying to help, charged us fiercely again and again and we had to stand our ground - but at least it was daylight! Our lady driver from Kichwa Tembo Camp, Lucy, was very brave and steered us out of trouble throughout! Whilst we kept the herd occupied the snare was removed from the young elephant by Dr. Mijele and the AKTF Team. Brian Heath, CEO of the Mara Conservancy and Dr. Asuka Takita managed to arrive in time to assist with the snare removal. Last year AKTF sponsored Dr. Takita to go to South Africa to train as a wildlife vet so this was good experience for her.



**Matriarchs Supporting Tranquilized Young Bull**



**Angry Mother and Tranquilized Young Bull**

**Photos by Devon McCleary**



**Dr. Dominic Mijele and AKTF Team with Injured Elephant  
Photo by Elias Kamande**

Once he was given the revival drug, the young elephant got up groggily and walked towards his mother who was now waiting in the distance. I thought there would be a happy reunion as he approached - but not a bit of it! It was as though she had seen a ghost, thinking him dead, and she headed off at high speed with tail in the air trumpeting! They did, however, happily reunite and settled down in the forest.



**Young Bull Elephant Reviving**



**Dr. Mijele**



**Anne with Kichwa Tembo & Mara Conservancy Supporters Displaying Snare**

**Photos by Devon McCleary**

This was not the end of our excitement that day.....the Mara Conservancy rangers, their tracker dog, Morani, and the AKTF Team also managed to apprehend four poachers from Tanzania - who sadly had already done some damage. They were found with a huge pile of hippo and warthog meat. I was taken to "meet" the poachers once they had been apprehended deep in the forest and gave them a thorough tongue lashing at the end of which they held their hands on their hearts and said they were sorry and they wouldn't be back to poach again. I wish I could believe that!! The Warden in charge said he had never seen that side of me before! Can you imagine their reaction when this irate white woman appeared in the forest to chastise them!!



**Mara Conservancy Rangers with "Morani", the Tracker Dog which Tracked the Poachers**



**AKTF Team, Mara Conservancy Rangers and Wa Kuria Poachers**



**Confiscated Hippo Meat Burnt by Rangers**

**Photos by Devon McCleary**

I also started Phase II of the fortification of the Masai livestock enclosures as Phase I (where we fortified around 35 livestock enclosures against predation) has proven to be so successful with no further predation recorded in these "bomas". This is truly wonderful news. The rains have started, however, so the lorry which had brought the wire and water tanks from Nairobi was unable to reach the Masai homes as the roads are non-existent at the best of times and impassable when it rains! It was a challenge and Kichwa Tembo Camp, once again, assisted by providing a Landrover onto which we loaded and distributed the wire. The wire distribution is being received with great enthusiasm by the Masai herders. I was recently told by one Masai family that now their livestock enclosure was fortified with the wire, they were able to sleep through the night for the first time ever. The need is so great and their challenges with predation are sobering. I require that they buy one roll of chain link and I provide one free so that they are invested in the project which I feel is critically important and the Masai agree and are happy to participate financially.



**Wire Distribution**



**Uncompleted Livestock Enclosure Fortified with Wire**

**Photos by Devon McCleary**

We delivered several 500 liter water tanks, a gutter system and iron sheets to collect the water to several "bomas". This has become a very important part of the project - not only does this help the lives of the women (who otherwise have to walk for miles to collect dirty river water) but it also provides clean drinking water to these families thus reducing sickness. It also encourages good hygiene - without which many of the children, and adults, suffer from trachoma and other diseases.

The Born Free Foundation and the AKTF mobile film theater are travelling in the Mara to show films on deforestation and its relationship to water (or lack thereof), bushmeat and conservation in general. Each presentation is being very well received with over 2,000 people attending so far. This is an excellent conservation and educational tool that helps the adults and children of the communities become involved in conservation initiatives.

I was excited to be able to share the mobile film theater project with the MacDonald family who were on safari with us in Kenya. We spent a wonderful afternoon visiting the Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage - spending time with these young elephant orphans and their keepers is always one of my favorite things to do. Maalim, the rhino, (who was the size of a handbag when he was found, but is now a healthy and large young rhino!) is in love with his mattress - instead of sleeping on it, he burrows underneath and has it cover him. This way he feels secure and does not require a keeper at night - the mattress is enough!

I also had the pleasure to host Jess Atkins who works with MEAK – Medical and Educational Air to Kenya, and John Paul Teutonico in the Mara so that they could learn about our work first hand. As you will have read in my previous newsletter, MEAK and Jess, have helped the Kenyan people in many wonderful ways by sponsoring mobile medical clinics, flying in heart surgeons to attend to patients who otherwise would have no access to help, amongst other valuable medical assistance to many different communities. We held several community meetings with the local Masai people to find out what their most pressing health challenges are, and were told that malaria and typhoid were their two biggest threats - although there are many equally pressing health issues which they have to deal with on a daily basis.

Having learned this I have contacted the Chairman of a local medical clinic where perhaps we may be able to vaccinate the community against typhoid. MEAK and AKTF are looking at the way forward - it is challenging as the population has grown immensely so we are looking at several thousand people at a minimum. The best prevention for malaria is to sleep under nets which are currently not available in the area - so we will also look into the possibility of obtaining nets for them. I will keep you posted once we get a proposal put together.

The Anne K. Taylor Fund has also been certified by Wildlife Friendly and was featured on the radio program called "The Wild Life" on March 22, 2010. Julie Stein, co-founder and secretary of the board of the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network, discusses with the host, Dr. Laurel Neme, how the program works by offering wildlife friendly products to conserve threatened wildlife while contributing to the economic vitality of rural communities.

The program discussed the benefits of the AKTF projects (anti-poaching, anti-snaring, Masai women's beaded bracelets, water tanks, live stock enclosures, grain mills, etc.) and how they benefit not only the people but also the wildlife and the planet. You may listen to the program at [www.laurelneme.com](http://www.laurelneme.com) or <http://laurelneme.podbean.com>. The program name is The Wildlife: Wildlife Friendly Certification, Julie Stein & Elephant Seal Update, C. Henrichs (March 22, 2010).

I spent a wonderful couple of days with friends in the Aberdare National Park, celebrating the completion of an electric fence which now surrounds the park thus preventing human/wildlife conflict. This was a major feat and one of which the Rhino Ark, who raised money for the fence, should be justly proud. Lord Aberdare flew in from England to join the celebration - the park was named after his ancestors, none of whom had visited the Park so this was a great moment. The scenery is absolutely spectacular - it was particularly fun for me as I grew up in the Aberdare Mountains so it was a nostalgic couple of days. The leopard sightings in this little-visited park are quite regular and always amazing - such beautiful creatures!

My friend and generous AKT Fund supporter, Devon McCleary, just left Kenya after a wonderful safari, and I was lucky enough to be able to see her in Nairobi and also join her on parts of her safari. I did not join Devon at Ol Malo in Laikipia but she had a great time there being hosted by my friends, the Francombes. Her camel and horseback rides resulted in her walking gingerly for the next few days due to her sore muscles!! But she reported that it was wonderful and well worth it.

We met up on the Samburu airstrip (which was a surprise for her as she was not expecting me!). We had a great game drive through Samburu Game Reserve along the Uaso Nyiro River - enjoying watching the elephants playing in the water - on our way to Saruni Samburu, an incredible new lodge designed in Moroccan style with infinite views of wild Africa. We had some amazing sightings including two Caracals which I have not seen in a long time. The spa services were enough to make one melt.

From here we flew to a favorite property, Sirikoi on the Lewa Conservancy, belonging to our friends Willie and Sue Roberts. Since I was last there they have added a fabulous family house which is ideal for 3 or 4 people as it has 2 big bedrooms, sitting room and verandah. The animals were abundant, the fellowship most enjoyable, the food to "die over" (so many pounds added!). Everything in fact was perfect - except, of course, the extra pounds!! We had the added bonus of seeing the "three brothers" (a coalition of three huge cheetahs) and the water hole just in front of the camp was always a hive of activity with visits from many different species of wildlife. What a treat!

From Sirikoi we flew to the Masai Mara with which many of you are familiar. Devon accompanied me on all the above adventures and kindly recorded them with her photographic skills. She got some fantastic shots of the animal rescues in the Masai Mara and she is kindly letting me share some of the photos with you in this update. She was very brave throughout and did not flinch during the rescues! Impressive! It was nice for me to be able to show Devon first hand the work we do in the Mara through the Anne K. Taylor Fund, with her support and that of so many, which is so diverse combining both the community and the wildlife.

I have just returned from Ol Donyo Wuas, a beautiful lodge in Kenya's Chyulu Hills, located between Amboseli and Tsavo National Parks. This is a property which we have used for a long time and it is now better than ever having been completely rebuilt. The rooms and views are incredible overlooking endless plains with a backdrop of Mt. Kilimanjaro, which currently has a good covering of snow. I spent quite a bit of time in a hide overlooking a waterhole - each day several fabulous old gentlemen bull elephants (with huge tusks!) would amble by within feet of us to splash around in the water....it was a breathtaking experience. I also took advantage of the horseback riding from Ol Donyo Wuas where we were able to ride "close up and personal" with beautiful giraffe and less "close up and personal" with elephants - it is something else again to see these magnificent animals from horseback.

Patrick and Nicola, who operate the horseback safaris, have a stable full of beautiful, well mannered and well trained horses and offer day rides or anything up to a six day ride across the ranch and through the Amboseli area - this is something I highly recommend for horseback enthusiasts. The riding terrain is perfect. Ol Donyo Wuas , beautifully managed and hosted by Anton, Emma and Sissa, offers a variety of adventures (aside from the horseback riding) which include mountain biking, walking with a fantastic tracker, picnicking in the verdant hills, gamedriving to enjoy the wildlife - or perhaps just lazing the afternoon away at ones very private and personal plunge pool! An option I did take advantage of followed by a relaxing massage (someone has to do it!!). Tomorrow I am off to check out two properties on our beautiful Indian Ocean coast - Almanara and Alfajiri after which I will be going to spend a few days at an old favourite, Peponi Hotel on Lamu Island. I am looking forward to it and look forward to sharing some of these wonderful places with you on your next visit.

The country is looking beautiful and green and the animals are prolific! I hope we will have the pleasure of welcoming many of you back on safari to Kenya to enjoy our wonderful people and spectacular wildlife.

In closing my sincere thanks go to our team members for their dedicated hard work in preserving the wildlife for future generations, and to Care For The Wild, Kenya and UK for their generous support of the desnaring team. Thanks, too, go to the Mara Conservancy and the rangers who patrol with, and protect, our de-snaring team who are unarmed. I am also grateful to Kichwa Tembo Camp, where I live, for their unwavering support of our work - and to the driver/guides for being an active part of protecting the wildlife and helping us so willingly whenever we need it. Their observation and reports of injured animals allows me to organize the rescues. Thanks too, to Olonana Camp and driver/guides for their support when requested and to Joseph for his personal support of the use of his vehicle when needed.

Finally my deepest gratitude to all of you who support our work with your generous donations without which we could achieve nothing. You can never know how much this support means to me personally and the animals and people of Kenya - a million thanks.

With warm regards,  
Anne



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