



## A. K. Taylor International – November 2007 Newsletter

Dear Friends and Fellow Travellers:

It has been some time since I have been in touch but I will now try to catch you up on all of our news. I have recently returned to Montana having spent several months of “safari-ing” in Kenya, Uganda, Botswana, Zambia and South Africa. What an amazing few months it has been!

This summer, Farley and I spent time in Kenya visiting many of our guests whose safaris we had organized. It was wonderful being able to put faces to names and lifetime friendships have been formed. We thank all of you who travelled with us and for entrusting us with these safaris. We recognise that they represent a large investment and we hope the positive experiences will last you a lifetime.

In September, Farley and I accompanied a small group of friends to South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. The Cape Grace Hotel in Cape Town was a wonderful place to start off this epic safari.



Lions on pathway at Chief's Camp, Botswana



Wild dog playing, Botswana

Photos by Devon Page McCleary

After three nights in Cape Town and visiting the Cape Peninsula (where we saw whales and penguins!), we set off for Chief's Camp in Botswana which was certainly an area full of excitement and adventure! We were lucky enough on the first day to find a pack of wild dog which frolicked around our vehicle for all three days of our visit! They really put on a show for us. We also had three lions resting on the path to our tent, with one actually being under it (the tent is on a platform to allow for flooding of the Okavango Delta and we squinted through the floor boards to watch her – what a thrill!).

Anne with Jabu in Botswana  
Photo: Devon Page McCleary



In a previous newsletter, I mentioned that I was privileged to spend the afternoon walking with Doug Groves and his elephant family. I could not wait to have this experience again. The second time was as wonderful as the first – if not better. This is a remarkable story about the dedication of one man, his wife and his staff of keepers. Doug rescued two elephants which were the sole survivors of a culling operation. The third was to have been destroyed as she and another elephant were causing havoc. Their human keepers' love and commitment have made these elephants into amazing ambassadors for their kind. For more information about this project, please visit [www.livingwithelephants.org](http://www.livingwithelephants.org). It is an experience I can highly recommend to anyone who might want to visit Botswana, and in my opinion, it is worth a special trip! Do contact us to make these arrangements for you.

It was fun for us to revisit Zambia. The camps in this country are the perfect balance between old-school safari styles but with the necessary amenities along with fabulous food and top-notch guides. The game viewing was remarkable throughout Zambia and the fact that we hardly ever saw another vehicle was a particular treat. It was exciting seeing leopard almost on a daily basis going about their business in the middle of the day. It was also wonderful to see Greater Kudu in large herds. They are truly beautiful animals and Southern Africa is the best place to see them in large numbers. The camps were all in wonderful settings and we often did not even have to leave camp to see herds of elephants playing in the Luangwa River in the heat of the day. On a walking safari, we enjoyed coming face to face with elephants - and as they are bigger than we are, we gave them the right of way!



Greater Kudu  
Photo: Paul Benson

For the birders amongst you, the carmine bee eater colonies, consisting of thousands of birds, were spectacular. These beautiful red birds covered entire riverbanks as they chose their nesting sites. Fish Eagles, who prey on them, would occasionally swoop over the riverbank to bully them (in my opinion!) and then the sky would be redder than any sunset you have ever seen as the bee eaters scattered! Crocodiles have also been known to snap their jaws at the birds from the water...never a dull moment!

Apart from the above, the highlights of the past few months have been:

- **Visiting Ithumba, in Tsavo East National Park, Kenya** where Dame Daphne Sheldrick's elephant orphans are taken once they reach approximately two years of age. Here the orphans from Nairobi join with the herd of orphans already at Ithumba. They wander the bush throughout the day with their human keepers, preparing them to be completely independent. The herd now consists of approximately 25 elephants of varying ages with Yatta, an eight year-old, being the self designated matriarch taking care of the younger orphans, under the watchful eyes of their keepers. In the middle of the day, they visit a nearby waterhole where the younger orphans are given their bottles – which we, as visitors, are allowed to participate in. The elephant babies are so well behaved and tuck their trunks out of the way and slurp down three bottles of their formula....the relationships between the keepers and the elephants are enviable.

We have shared this experience with several of our guests this year, and I think each one has felt privileged to have been a participant in such an awe-inspiring project. The tented camp at Ithumba is simple but tastefully done and the peace and silence are addictive (hard things to find these days!) – I have gone back to this camp to visit the elephants time after time – a total of three times in this year alone! In order to visit this camp, each guest must have previously adopted a Sheldrick elephant orphan. It is wonderful to know that the elephants will be free to roam at Ithumba in Tsavo East and will eventually join up with wild herds. Daphne and her staff are to be commended for their dedication to saving these magnificent animals from which we could and should learn so much. On a personal note I am extremely grateful to this Trust for allowing us this privilege. For more information on the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust please visit their website at [www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org](http://www.sheldrickwildlifetrust.org) **I suggest giving the gift of a baby elephant adoption to any of your friends and family this Christmas – it is easy to do so online and you receive monthly updates on your “orphan” from the Trust.**



The orphans at Ithumba



Anne feeding baby elephant

- **Visiting the Mountain Gorillas in Uganda** – I cannot stay away from these magnificent creatures. I was so grateful to Chris and Christina Morin for inviting me to join them on the gorilla tracking adventure which we organized. How wonderful it is to be with the gorillas in the Impenetrable Forest, even though one

can only be with the gorillas for one hour per visit. This is strictly regulated so as not to disturb the gorillas' lives. This is something that I feel everyone should experience in his or her lifetime. The Gorilla Forest Camp is terrific and is nestled into the forest. It is often visited by the gorilla families! After this trip, I vowed to visit the gym every day (which of course I have not done!) as the terrain through which we trekked is quite steep and I was puffing and panting! The porters, however, are wonderful and offer every assistance to anyone who might need it.



Gorilla mother and baby in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, Uganda

Uganda is an excellent destination for people interested in “birding” or serious ornithologists. We are fortunate enough to have access to the most amazing birding guide one could ever imagine – he can call in almost any bird by playing his ipod on which he has recorded almost every species' call. There is many a frustrated bird out there still looking for the competition as he plays the male's courting call...and they come in to defend their territory!

On all of our safaris we try to include exposure to the people of the countries we visit, in addition to the wildlife. We feel this gives our guests a better understanding of their destination. It has been interesting to us that the highlights of most of our safaris, appears to have been the time spent with the schoolchildren or being exposed to some of the community conservation projects which are in place. This we can do because of our personal connection with the people in the countries we visit. I am always proud to involve our guests in my **Anne K. Taylor Fund (501(c)3)** community and conservation project in the Masai Mara. We do anti-poaching work with a team of local Masai warriors, as well as extensive work in the schools and local communities. I would love for you to visit my website [www.aktaylor.com](http://www.aktaylor.com) (go to Anne K. Taylor Fund) to learn more about our work.



Masai children from Pusangi School, Masai Mara Kenya  
Photo: Paul Benson

### **Masai Women's Project-Beaded Bracelets:**

With the Holidays soon upon us, if any of you would like to help my women's project in the Mara, I have beautiful Masai bracelets for sale at \$30.00 each, plus postage. All the proceeds go to the Masai women who bead them. With profits from previous sales, the women bought a grain-grinding machine which makes their lives easier. They also rent out the use of it to other women thus receiving a monthly income. Their next ambition, from future sales, is to put in a general store to supply the needs of the community who, currently, have to walk several miles to the closest store.

### **Snare Art Animal Sculptures by artist Kioko Mwitiki**

I also still have in hand some Snare Art Sculptures which also make wonderful gifts – rhino, lion, warthog, giraffe and elephant. These are \$50.00 each, plus postage with all profits going back to the project. They are made from the wire snares confiscated by my desnaring team from the Masai Mara as part of our project.



Snare art commissioned through Kioko Mwitiki, world renowned artist.

Should you want to make any purchases, please contact us at 406 294 9430 or [mary@aktaylor.com](mailto:mary@aktaylor.com) and we can ship them out immediately.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for allowing us to assist you with your travel plans to the many destinations in the world with which we are familiar. We also want to send a big thank-you to all who continue to support the Anne K. Taylor Fund. Your generosity allows us to continue the valuable work we are doing with the people and for the animals in the Masai Mara. We are sincerely grateful.

I am happy to welcome Janice Cormany ([Janice@aktaylor.com](mailto:Janice@aktaylor.com)) who is joining our company. She comes with many years of experience in the travel industry and I know she will bring great things to A. K. Taylor International. She will be joining Farley (312 440 9830 or [Farley@aktaylor.com](mailto:Farley@aktaylor.com)) in Chicago. Mary Zrubek (406 294 9430 or [Mary@aktaylor.com](mailto:Mary@aktaylor.com)) continues to be our life support in the Billings office and if you have any questions please contact her. We all hope that you will think of us for your upcoming travel plans not only to Africa but to the numerous other destinations with which we are familiar – and we welcome your calls. Thank you.

We hope you all have a very happy Holiday Season – I will, of course, shortly be returning on my winter migration to Africa, the land of my passion which both Farley and I love to share with our guests. As most of you know, I can be contacted at [Anne@aktaylor.com](mailto:Anne@aktaylor.com) . My colleagues monitor this e-mail address in my absence. They can get messages to me from time to time and can take care of any immediate requests you might have.



Warmest Regards,

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