

## WHAT DO WE DO?



### Black Rhino

The Black Rhino is a magnificent creature whose ancestors roamed the earth for 60 million years. Since 1970, when black rhinos numbered as many as 65,000 (with 10,000 in Tanzania), the population has dwindled to a staggering 3,600 (with approximately 35 in Tanzania). The rhino's downfall is directly related to the value of its horn. You could say that the horn has cost it its life. In some Arab countries rhino horns are carved into dagger hilts. In Yemen, a single horn can bring up to \$65,000.00 on the black market. But the largest demand comes from Asia, where traditional healers promote powdered rhino horn as an analgesic. There, it is worth more than twice its weight in gold.

Rhino sanctuaries like the one at Mkomazi are absolutely essential to the survival of the species. The 30-square-mile compound is surrounded by an eight-foot-high electrified and alarmed fence and is patrolled around the clock by armed guards. It took five years to build at a cost of \$500,000.00. Home to a founder population of eight rhinos and the first sanctuary of its kind in Tanzania, it was stocked by airlifting the rhinos, of a subspecies indigenous to the area, from Addo National Park in South Africa at great expense.

Our results to date prove beyond doubt that we refuse to allow the vanity and superstitions of a tiny minority to deprive the world of this unique and glorious creature.



### Hunting Dog

The African Hunting Dog is a critically endangered species. There are fewer than 3,000 in all of Africa. For years they were treated as vermin, shot at and poisoned by farmers, hunters, pastoralists and game departments. Also, because the Hunting Dog is a sociable animal, diseases picked up from domestic dogs spread quickly and could wipe out an entire pack in no time. Only in recent years have people realized that the Hunting Dog is not an indiscriminate killer, but a highly intelligent social animal, an efficient hunter who actually improves the quality of the game by removing the weaklings and scattering herds to prevent inbreeding. For this reason an international effort is underway to stabilize the numbers and to reintroduce the species to its traditional homeland in East Africa.

The captive breeding and translocation program at Mkomazi, the first of its kind in East Africa, was

founded in 1995 to provide dogs for this multinational effort. The dogs are allocated to four breeding compounds to maximize genetic diversity. An extensive veterinary program has been set up to improve their immunity to disease. A reintroduction is now being planned together with the government. The most elusive constituent of any reintroduction effort is political will. We have that, and it is now up to us to provide the know-how and resources to get the job done. Each reintroduction will cost over \$100,000.00. The annual running costs for the captive breeding and veterinary program are approximately \$45,000.00. With your help, we are well on our way to securing the survival of this enigmatic and ecologically important species.



### Other residents

At the end of the 1980s, after two decades of being stalked and slaughtered by ivory poachers, only eleven elephants remained in Mkomazi. Today, during the rainy season, close on 1,000 elephants range freely across the reserve, including many herds of breeding females with their young. Nina, the elephant whom we rehabilitated to the wild after 27 years in a zoo, went missing for a few weeks, and then one morning we found the tracks of an adult and a baby elephant next to her water drum near the workshop.



### Outreach Program

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world. So it is hardly surprising that some of the people are willing to risk their lives for a rhino horn, which is worth a small fortune by their standards. The actions of farmers who shoot elephants that trample their crops in search of water during the dry season are also understandable. And it does not take a stretch of the imagination to grasp that territory set aside for the protection of wild animals deprives the local population of land for hunting, farming and grazing. In short, the land and animals that could help them feed their children are denied them in order to preserve the wildlife.

Acutely aware of the human dimension of animal and habitat conservation, Mkomazi established the Outreach Program in 1993. The long-term commitment is to ensure that the local communities benefit from the reserve and come to view wild animals as a non-consumptive resource.

The Outreach program is committed to providing education and medical assistance in the 41 villages and 3 districts around the reserve. This includes funding the construction of a 320-pupil secondary school in the village of Kisiwani; renovating classrooms in local primary and secondary schools;

refurbishing a local medical dispensary; assisting local women's groups; improving and expanding local water supplies; building dams in the reserve to provide dry-season water sources for the large mammals; and providing heavy machinery for the maintenance of roads and ditches. These are just some of the ways in which Mkomazi contributes to the well-being of its neighbors and mitigates the conflict between villagers and wildlife. Mkomazi operates thanks to a team of 45 employees, many of whom have been working with Tony for over 15 years. Trained on the job, they are hard-working, loyal and entirely dedicated to saving the animals they work with.

### **In short**

*Over the years, funds and expertise provided by the Trust have supported:*

- Refurbishment of local medical dispensary;
- Training of a young teacher at a wildlife college for future educational programs;
- Assistance to local women's groups to educate and assist with health and economic issues;
- Assistance to the National Polio Vaccine Campaigns;
- Assistance to the town councils with use of the Trust's plant machinery;
- Assistance to local villagers with the supply of water, with the drilling and sinking of a bore hole at the Reserve's headquarters financed by the Trust;
- Medical assistance through the Flying Doctors Society to Asako village on the Boundary of Kora National Park in Kenya;
- Water rehabilitation assistance through AMREF to Asako village.

### **Mkomazi**

Established by the Tanzanian Government in 1951, the Mkomazi Game Reserve encompasses over 1200 square miles (3,276 sq. km) in northeast Tanzania. Adjacent to Kenya's Tsavo National Park, together they comprise one of the largest protected wilderness ecosystems in Africa. In 1988, with Mkomazi on the brink of ecological disaster due to overgrazing, burning, indiscriminate hunting and poaching, the Tanzanian Government initiated a program of habitat rehabilitation and endangered species reintroduction, with the goal of re-establishing a viable ecosystem directly linked to Tsavo. The Mkomazi Project achieved National Priority Project status.

In 1989, a request came from the Tanzanian Government to the Tony Fitzjohn/George Adamson African Wildlife Preservation Trust and Tony Fitzjohn to work in partnership with them in the rehabilitation of the reserve and to initiate crucial endangered species programs at a later date. The Trust has funded much of the reserve rehabilitation, all of the endangered species programs, flying patrols and outreach programs.

In 2005, the Mkomazi Game Preserve was declared a national park by the Tanzanian government in Parliament, and the process is underway for TANAPA to take over Mkomazi. This is great boost for its continued survival as a protected ecosystem well into the future and is the highest protection an area can be afforded in Tanzania.



## **RESULTS TO DATE**

### **Habitat, wildlife and infrastructure**

- The resident elephant population numbers nearly 1000 in the wet season, from 11 in 1988.
- There has been a remarkable recovery in the numbers of lions, hyenas, impala, eland, oryx, gerenuk and lesser kudu.
- The buffalo, zebra, giraffe and kongoni populations are steadily increasing.
- Over 370 miles (600 kms) of roads, tracks and boundaries have been made.
- A VHF short wave radio system with full reserve coverage has been installed. This is used for ranger and security patrols, with mobiles in vehicles and hand held radios, and forms a direct link between the Trust's base camp and the reserve headquarters.
- A year round water supply established by desilting and constructing dams and sinking of bore holes in three areas.

- Firebreaks have been cleared and 5 airstrips built or reclaimed.
- Over 1000 hours of flying patrols have been undertaken to give a consistent relay of information to the reserve HQ, as well as general aerial census.
- Plant machinery (Caterpillar 12G Grader, JCB, Tractor and trailer) operate on a consistent basis.

### **Endangered species program - Black Rhino**

- From a population of over 10,000 in the mid-1970s, only about 29 black rhinos exist today in Tanzania, with less than 2800 left in Africa.
- The goal of the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary is to establish a viable breeding population of 20 *Diceros bicornis michaeli* whose offspring will be used to reinforce existing populations in Tanzania and Kenya.
- The 45 square km. sanctuary, surrounded by 30 kms of 9' electrified and alarmed fence, with full time armed guards was completed in 1997 at a cost of nearly \$500,000.
- In 1997 the first four rhinos were airlifted to the sanctuary from South Africa's Addo National Park. These rhinos are an indigenous subspecies to northern Tanzania.
- In 2001, four more Rhinos were airlifted into Mkomazi, once again from Addo National Park.
- In 2004 and in 2006, a female and then a male calf were born in the wild in the sanctuary. At the time of writing in 2006, we have 2 more females that are expecting.
- Discussion is currently taking place with the Kenya Wildlife Services, US and European zoos and wildlife parks for translocations, loans or swaps for genetic diversity.

### **Endangered species program - African Hunting Dog**

- A successful captive breeding and veterinary program for the nearly extinct African Hunting Dog was established in 1995 to provide dogs for the multinational effort to try to reintroduce this species in to its traditional ranges in East Africa. This is the first captive-breeding program in East Africa.
- The founder populations of dogs were separated into breeding compounds to give maximum and viable genetic diversity.
- A veterinary program has been underway to establish their immunity to disease.
- Together with the government, a planned reintroduction is now in progress. A steering committee has been formed for this purpose of which Fitzjohn is a member. The dogs will be reintroduced into areas where they will have the best chance of success.

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