

WILDLIFE
RECORDS

40 YEARS
THE ASPINALL
FOUNDATION
Registered Charity No. 326567

GROUND BREAKING
CONSERVATION

UPDATES FROM
THE FIELD

SUCCESS IN
SOUTH AFRICA

SUMMER 2024

CONTENTS

03. A FRESH START FOR LIONESSES



05. ENTIRE RHINO POPULATION AT LOSKOP DE-HORNED FOR THEIR PROTECTION

09. WORLD'S LARGEST TRANSLOCATION OF VULTURES AIMS TO HALT EXTINCTION



11. TIGER RESCUE – FOUR MONTH OLD BABOO RESCUED FROM A LIFE OF PAIN

13. PARK NEWS



15. GOING FURTHER





WELCOME

from Damian Aspinall

I am very excited to introduce this issue of Wildcry, which is packed full of great news from our international projects. Together, we have helped more than 2,000 animals so far. From the jungles of Sumatra to the golden plains of South Africa and untamed wilderness of Congo & Gabon, our teams stand steadfast in the fight against cruelty and ready to respond at a moment's notice to calls for help.

Your continued support makes this possible. The incredible response to our Southern Africa Emergency Rescue Appeal has allowed our team to work harder than ever to protect wildlife. Since I last wrote to you, your donations have allowed us to save the lives of four lionesses who would otherwise have found themselves in the crosshairs, rescue a tiger from deplorable conditions and translocate 163 injured vultures to a new forever home.

On the cover of this issue, you can see our recently rewilded lions, Azi & Zazu, thriving in the wild and showing that captivity can never dull the razor sharp hunting instincts of big cats, despite what the zoo industry would have you believe. More information on Azi & Zazu's incredible success will be in the next issue of Wildcry. In the meantime, visit my Instagram page for all the latest updates on these inspirational cats.

Our teams have continued their tireless work to protect gorillas, langurs and many other species all around the world and we have also started work on a very exciting new project at Loskop Dam. This new project has the potential to transform Loskop into a truly vast new reserve, offering refuge to countless animals.

With so much good news coming from our projects around the world and the rapid expansion of our work in South Africa, the future looks bright. Our network of protection continues to spread, allowing many, many more animals to benefit from your support. I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Wildcry and hearing more about how your donations have made a real impact on real, on-the-ground conservation efforts. It's too late to rewind, but together we can rewild!

Wiki



FOUR LIONESSES STARTED A NEW LIFE

AND A NEW POPULATION AT BABANANGO
GAME RESERVE LAST OCTOBER.

SUCCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

A FRESH START FOR FOUR LIONESSES



You may recall that last Christmas we urgently appealed for support for our incredible team in South Africa.

Many of you stepped up to join us in the fight to protect wildlife in desperate need. Your generous gifts allowed our team to do even more to rescue, rehabilitate and rewild hundreds of animals who would have faced uncertain fates without your support.

Dereck, our Project Director in Southern Africa, would like to offer his deep and sincere gratitude to every one of you and has shared some incredible updates from the field which we hope you will enjoy.



We recently relocated two lionesses from Kwandwe Private Game Reserve and two from Mount Camdeboo Private Game Reserve, both located in South Africa's Eastern Cape. Both reserves have growing lion numbers, and this population pressure sadly increases the risk of potential culling.

who were used to the game viewing vehicles Babanango uses for ecotourism and ensured they came from two different reserves to provide as much genetic diversity as possible.

to conservation who generously gifted us the flights required to transport Nora and Kibibi.

All four lionesses are now living free at Babanango, where we hope they will eventually breed with the recently reintroduced males and usher in the first generation of lions to be born at Babanango for more than a century.

The first two lionesses were transported by road and the second pair – two sisters named Nora and Kibibi – followed by light aircraft. As they are large, healthy girls, the lionesses were too heavy to be flown together, so individual flights were provided. We are very grateful to The Bateleurs, a wonderful non-profit pilot organisation dedicated

We provided tracking collars to the Babanango team so we can keep an eye on the lionesses and ensure they are well-protected. We look forward to sharing updates soon.



Our team, co-funded with help from Over and Above Africa, stepped in and translocated the cats more than 1,000 km away to another reserve, where they will be safe and will form the cornerstone of a new population of lions.



The lioness' new home is named Babanango: a newly created reserve that is reintroducing several species, including cheetahs, elephants, and rhinos. Two stunning male lions had already been reintroduced by the Babanango team and it was vital for us to work together to carefully choose suitable females to form the basis of a brand-new lion population in the area. We selected lionesses

“

We are very glad to have found an ideal environment for these lionesses, where they will have the chance to thrive and raise families. It's very difficult to find safe new homes for lions because most of the suitable reserves are already at capacity.

**DERECK MILBURN
SOUTH AFRICAN
PROJECT DIRECTOR**

We work hard to find reserves that can take on more land and we have identified a number of open areas that could eventually take lions, but they will require significant investment.

ENTIRE RHINO POPULATION AT LOSKOP DE-HORNED FOR THEIR PROTECTION

When you think of rhinos, one of the first things you think of is probably their dramatic, scimitar-shaped horns. Growing at a rate of 3-4 inches per year and reaching a maximum length up to five feet, rhino horn is tragically one of the most trafficked products of

the illegal wildlife trade. Once, it was mainly used in traditional medicine, but in an age of conspicuous consumption, the mere possession of the expensive illegal horns has become a status symbol.

Over 7.5 tonnes of illegal rhino horn - for which more than 9,000 rhinos would have had to die - has been seized by police and customs authorities around the world over the past decade.

WE WILL NOT ALLOW THIS BUTCHERY TO CONTINUE.



SUCCESS IN
SOUTH AFRICA



The rhino population of Loskop is now protected and is being closely monitored by the reserve's dedicated management team. These vital operations to protect lives are only possible thanks to your support. Thank you for standing with us in the battle against poaching.

One of the simplest and most effective ways to protect rhinos is to remove their horns, rendering the animal completely worthless to poachers. While it is sad to take away what is so unique about rhinos, 'dehorning' is a painless and reliable way to keep them safe.

Last July, our incredible South Africa Team, alongside partners from Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MPTA) and African Wildlife Vets, embarked on a mission to find and dehorn the entire rhino population at Loskop Dam Nature Reserve, a huge reserve located roughly 110 miles east of Pretoria.

The first step was to find every individual rhino on the 88-square-mile reserve. To do this, we used a combination of trained rangers tracking on the ground and helicopter support searching for rhinos from the air. Where the bush is very dense, it is like looking for a needle in a haystack, and providing helicopter coverage for such a large area is expensive. The operation was funded by our generous long-term supporters, DCM Surfaces.

We located and dehorned 42 rhinos over three days and the operation was declared a resounding success, with these magnificent creatures now safe from poaching. However, a surprise was hiding back at Loskop...

In October, the reserve management team identified 6 rhinos that still had horns: they had been hiding from our helicopters in the bushes! We had to act quickly to protect these individuals from poachers, so we assembled an emergency team, provided a helicopter immediately and the rhinos were safely dehorned just a few hours later.



THE DEHORNING PROCESS

The dehorning of each rhino is a sensitive procedure, requiring precision and care. After the rhinos are located, they are sedated using a dart gun. This is often done from the air, with experts carefully delivering individually measured dosages of sedative to each animal from a moving helicopter to ensure efficiency and safety.

When it is safe to do so, our team on the ground move in and a wildlife veterinarian carefully removes the horns, performs all necessary check-ups and gathers vital data.



WHY WE DEHORN:

Dehorning is the lesser of two evils. By removing the horn, we remove the temptation for poachers. Without horns, rhinos are effectively worthless to hunters and can continue to live happy, healthy lives in the wild.



LOCATION AND TRACKING:

We used helicopters to locate each rhino. A cross marked on the rhinos' backs ensured no animal was darted twice.



IMMOBILISATION:

From the air, a wildlife veterinarian administered a carefully calculated dose of sedative using a dart gun, considering each individual rhino's size and health.



SAFETY MEASURES:

Once immobilised, the rhino's eyes were covered, and earplugs were inserted to minimise stress. Vital signs were continuously monitored.



DEHORNING:

A chainsaw or similar tool was used to remove the horn, a painless process as the horn is made of keratin, like human hair and nails.



POST-PROCEDURE CARE:

The horn stub was treated with antiseptic, and a reversal agent was administered to wake the rhino from sedation.



MONITORING:

Post-procedure, each rhino was closely observed to ensure a smooth recovery.

SUCCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA



Dehorning costs between £500-£800 per rhino, and with rhino horns growing back at a rate of 3 to 4 inches per year, it must be repeated every 12 to 24 months. But their lives are priceless.

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT.**



WORLD'S LARGEST TRANSLOCATION AND REWILDING OF VULTURES AIMS TO HALT EXTINCTION

We are very happy to share that, thanks to your support, we recently translocated 163 disabled vultures within South Africa to help conserve two species under threat - the Cape vulture and the white-backed vulture.

All 163 birds were the victims of conflict with humans, and many had tragically been left flightless. Most of the injuries sustained by the vultures were caused by collisions with

power lines — a common problem in Southern Africa, where over 30% of annual vulture fatalities are caused by these collisions.

Other challenges faced by the Cape vulture and the white-backed vulture are habitat loss, poisoning, disturbances at breeding sites, and hunting. This pressure from humans has devastated their population, with numbers plummeting by up to 90% in the last century.

SUCCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The plight of vultures is sadly overlooked, as conservation groups and charities all-too-often focus only on the most visually appealing and most charismatic animals. We at The Aspinall Foundation believe that every single species matters, and with your continued help our team will step in to protect any animal in need.

We were informed of the plight of these vultures by VulPro, a non-profit dedicated to saving

African vultures, who had rescued and rehabilitated the flock at their world-leading rehabilitation facility at Hartbeespoort in the Northwest Province. However, all 163 birds needed to move over 1,000km away to a new breeding facility VulPro created with Shamwari Private Game Reserve in the Eastern Cape Province.

This truly epic undertaking required a team of the best experts. Working with the incredible team at Vulpro, we assembled a team of over 50

people to get the birds ready for the next step in their journey. A local veterinary team ensured the birds' well-being was prioritised above all else during the meticulously planned operation and DHL offered their expertise to ensure safe transportation. We organised and co-ordinated the entire project, including building a transport crate for each bird.



This exceptional team took just 2.5 hours to load the birds for their 1,042 km journey. The birds were carefully monitored each step of the way and after 18 hours, they arrived safely at Shamwari Private Game Reserve.

Although these flightless animals can never be safely released into the wild, they can live happy, healthy lives in protected areas such as Shamwari. They are able to breed, and the new generation of vultures will help to ensure the future of their species. The offspring of the rehabilitated birds will eventually be released into the wild, repopulating the severely depleted Eastern Cape Province.



WE BELIEVE EVERY SINGLE SPECIES MATTERS

“

**DERECK MILBURN
SOUTH AFRICAN
PROJECT DIRECTOR**

Consider that a single poisoning act can kill 100 vultures at a time! These 163 birds will breed, and we will release their offspring here and in other parts of Southern Africa.

We are excited to see what the impact of this is going to be. The scale of the translocation also helps to bring much-needed attention to the plight of vultures and their valuable role in the ecosystem.

TIGER RESCUE – FOUR MONTH OLD BABOO RESCUED FROM A LIFE OF PAIN

Thanks to your support, we have secured a brighter future for a Bengal tiger cub rescued from the clutches of the exotic pet trade in partnership with Isindile Big Cat & Predator Sanctuary and Second Chance Wildlife.

The tiger cub, a four-month-old male named Baboo, first came to our attention when he arrived at a veterinarians office in Islamabad in December 2022. He could barely move, and his pain was obvious. The defenceless cub was suffering from extreme malnourishment and had 12 broken bones in his tiny body.

The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) consulted with big cat experts from The Aspinal Foundation in South Africa and made the decision to seize Baboo. Intensive medical treatment and rehabilitation began immediately at Second Chance Wildlife (SCW) in Pakistan.

SUCCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA



This included a regime of supplements recommended by expert vet Dr Peter Caldwell, a tailored diet and daily physical therapy in a specially prepared enclosure with sunlight exposure — something Baboo had been cruelly denied for most of his short life.

After seven weeks of round-the-clock care, Baboo showed a truly amazing improvement. This little cub was a fighter and amazed us all by quickly gaining the ability to stand and move around his hospital enclosure. As his mobility continued to improve, the team transitioned him to a larger enclosure and began to look to the future.

In mid-2023, the Pakistani Federal Minister for Climate Change recognised Baboo's urgent need for a long-term home. Due to his challenging start in life, Baboo was not suitable for rewilding in India, so the search began for the very best sanctuary to provide a safe, forever home for this remarkable cat.

We worked in close partnership with the team at IWMB to find a suitable home for Baboo and after careful consideration, selected Isindile Big Cat and Predator Sanctuary in South Africa's Free State Province.



Isindile is a newly established, registered non-profit big cat sanctuary which provides a forever home to big cats in need. Located in the beautiful Witteberg mountains, the naturalistic enclosures for the rescued cats at Isindile are truly spectacular and their passionate team deliver an exceptional standard of care.

A 2.5-acre enclosure with specially built platforms and splash pool was prepared for Baboo. It even featured a 360° view over the valley, Witteberg mountains and into Lesotho's Maluti Mountains —

a huge difference from the dark, indoor prison where he spent his first few months of life.

With a forever home prepared, the time came for Baboo to leave Pakistan for his new life in South Africa. Now 17 months old, weighing over 70 kgs and fully mobile, Baboo completed an epic journey.



This included a road transfer to the Islamabad Airport, two international flights and then a lengthy road transfer from OR Tambo International Airport in South Africa to Isindile Big Cat and Predator Sanctuary.

He is settling in well and is getting to know his new neighbour: a fellow rescued female tiger named Amber. Their enclosures are adjacent to each other, and it is hoped that the pair will come to share a special bond in the safety of their new home.



PARK NEWS

SAYING GOODBYE TO AN OLD FRIEND

The team at our partner Howletts Wild Animal Park have said goodbye to Shumba, a 43-year-old female western lowland gorilla, who sadly passed away in February.

Shumba may be gone, but her contribution to her species will live on forever. Thank you for supporting our vital work to return gorillas to the wild.

Her dedicated keepers and the parks' expert vet team had been treating Shumba for a brain tumour with regular medication and monitoring her progress, trying to make her as comfortable as possible.

Sadly, Shumba succumbed to her illness on 26th February with her adopted baby, Kumbi by her side. The keepers and Shumba's gorilla family mourned her loss together and the animals were closely monitored during this sensitive period.

Shumba was a well-loved and very important member of the gorilla family at Howletts. Throughout her long life, she gave birth to eight offspring, three of whom went on to be rewilded.



Shumba's son Joshi, who began his rewilding journey in 2021, was the most recent of Shumba's family to return to the lands of their ancestors. He is thriving in the wild and ensuring that his mother's legacy lives on in the lush forests where all gorillas belong.

In addition to her biological offspring, Shumba adopted two babies that were rejected by their

birth mothers, one of those babies being Kumbi, an 18-month-old male.

Kumbi was initially hand-reared by the expert keepers at Howletts after he was rejected, but he was very quickly adopted by Shumba, who took over his physical care. The rest of the gorilla family are now coming together to support Kumbi, who is adapting to the loss under the watchful eye of his keepers.



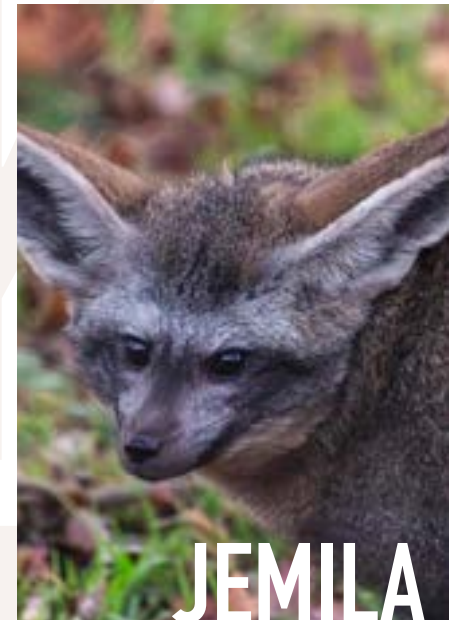
WE'RE BATTY FOR FOXES!

In late 2023, two bat-eared foxes arrived at Howletts, much to the delight of the very excited team there.

The two sisters, named Kaya and Jemila, arrived from a zoo in the Netherlands and are almost two



years old. With their enormous ears — which can make up to a third of the bat-eared fox's total height — and gentle appearance, these adorable little canids have quickly become a hit with visitors to our partner park.



Their trademark ears not only provide the bat-eared fox with fantastic hearing, they also help them to shed heat and cool down in their natural habitat of the sun-baked short-grass savannas and scrublands of eastern and southern Africa.



GOING FURTHER

RUN WITH US THIS OCTOBER

Be a wildlife warrior and sign up for The Aspinall Foundation's 40th anniversary fun run hosted at our partner site: Howletts Wild Animal Park, near Canterbury on Sunday 20th October 2024. You will be directly supporting our vital gorilla protection projects in Congo and Gabon, to secure the future for this iconic species.

The course will take you through 90 acres of ancient parkland at Howletts, where you will be cheered on (or more likely just watched) by more than 45 species of rare and endangered animals including giant anteaters, tigers, lions and gorillas. The event will start before the park opens its gates to the public, giving you an exclusive glimpse behind the scenes of Kent's original wild animal park.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS US TO HELP GORILLAS

- We work with partners to protect around one million acres of prime gorilla habitat within the unique savannah ecosystem of the Batéké Plateau.
- Our team has secured arrests for hundreds of poachers in Congo & Gabon and have been involved in over 300 wildlife cases, including seizures of live animals, pelts, ivory and other animal products.
- We support the park rangers who work to protect this biodiversity hotspot, where species such as forest elephant, serval, De Brazza's monkey, red river hog, hippopotamus and forest buffalo are recovering thanks to our protection.
- Our team has released more than 75 gorillas into areas of carefully selected protected wilderness and have celebrated more than 35 wild births so far. In 2021, we celebrated the FIRST EVER
- birth of a gorilla in the wild to captive-born and rewilded parents. The precious baby is named Taáli and will never see captivity or the cruelty of humans, thanks to the support of animal lovers like you!



**SCAN THE QR CODE
ON THIS PAGE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
THE HOWLETTS 5K AND HOW YOU CAN GET
INVOLVED.**



GOING FURTHER

ANNE REYNOLDS LEGACY

We spoke to dedicated supporter, Anne Reynolds, about her generous decision to remember The Aspinall Foundation in her will. The entire team at The Aspinall Foundation are deeply grateful to supporters like Anne.

Leaving a small percentage of your estate to The Aspinall Foundation can make a life changing difference to animals in need; because we can be there when they need us the most, and we can commit to ambitious projects to secure their survival for years to come.



I was asked recently why I supported The Aspinall Foundation. It's quite a long story but it started years ago when I was told that I was unable to have children. I then decided to focus my life on saving animals.

I am lucky enough to live very close to the wonderful Port Lympne Reserve in Kent. It is such a privilege

to be able to walk around the wildlife park and see the beautiful animals being cared for in such a wonderful way. It is during my many visits to the park that I have come to understand the work of The Aspinall Foundation and their efforts to return as many of these animals to the wild as possible.

In 1991 I went to Kenya and visited the Masai Mara. It was so wonderful to see the animals in their natural habitat roaming free. Since then, I have been lucky enough to visit Africa on multiple occasions. Over the years, it has become

increasingly clear that animals need to be protected otherwise in years to come, children will not be able to see these animals for themselves. This is why organisations such as The Aspinall Foundation are so invaluable.

I give as much as I can to support The Aspinall Foundation and leaving a gift in my will feels like the next step. It was very easy to do, and I feel very happy that I am doing my little bit to ensure these precious animals will be there for future generations to experience for themselves.

ANNE REYNOLDS
SUPPORTER OF THE ASPINALL FOUNDATION

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

In Annie's own words, it's very easy to leave a legacy whether you already have a will or are still to make one, and it's free too.

Simply visit our partner Make a Will Online's website at www.aspinallfoundation.org/legacy and they will take you through the process online and answer any questions you have, at no cost to you. If you prefer, you can write or amend your will with your chosen solicitor for a fee, or for free when

they take part in free will-writing months.

We are here to answer any questions you may have and you can find our brand new legacy brochure containing all you need to know about leaving a legacy to The Aspinall Foundation at www.aspinallfoundation.org/legacy. Alternatively, you can request a hard copy or speak to us about anything related to legacies on 01303 234 199 (Mon-Fri 9am to

5pm) or at fundraising@aspinallfoundation.org.

If you do make the compassionate decision to leave us a legacy, please let us know via the phone number or email address above, so we can keep you updated on our progress (especially if there are particular animals or projects you'd like to hear about), and to invite you to special events.



WILDCRY is published by The Aspinall Foundation. If you wish to contact us regarding this publication please email the editor on fundraising@aspinallfoundation.org

WILDCRY is designed and produced by The Aspinall Foundation. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the quality of the content of Wildcry, no liability can be accepted by the publishers or producers for any loss or damage resulting from the publication.

Photograph credit to Wiktoria West, Ana Norman Bermudez, Dave Rolfe.

