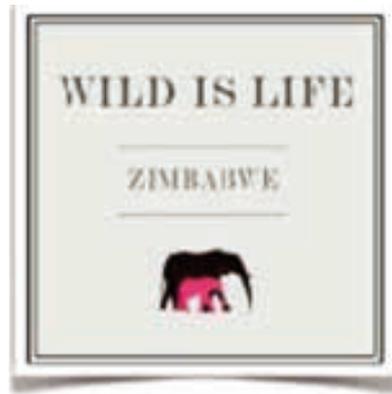


# A Culture of Care 2019



30 January 2020



# Wild is Life and Zen

Dearest Friends

Life is never dull in Zimbabwe! We are so fortunate to live a life of highs and lows, heat and dust, the magic of birth and the mystery of death. In between, we stop and contemplate our successes and our failures, never forgetting that we have a road to travel and many rivers to forge. We never rest on our laurels, nor take anything for granted. Life is precious. *Where there is breath, there is always hope!*

Looking back on 2019, I feel a great sense of achievement. We have weathered many storms this year and have taken giant steps in the progress of our major project, The ZEN Project. Working together with IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) has been a rewarding and successful collaboration.

Aside from elephants, we have released a number of smaller wild species. Our staff complement has increased by 46%. We have worked on a milk formula for neonates that is having remarkable results. We have planted many trees. We have created, built, improved, fixed and contributed in so many ways, about which you will read in this report.

Foremost on our minds, is the continuing drought in our country. 7 million people require food aid this coming year. Thereafter it will be more, as by now, the maize crops have largely failed due to below average rainfall thus far. The grass has not grown sufficiently, new growth is not evident in the forests and I fear greatly for the wildlife and animals, once winter sets in later in 2020.

We have to stay positive, however. We have to face a reality that will be evident in six months time. We have to plan and mitigate wherever possible. We

do what we can and we remember that even one life saved, is still making a difference.

Of lessons learned, none is greater than the thought that *humility is an essential element in the art of healing*. There is no place for ego. Whatever the Team does, it must always be done with a humble attitude, as nature may be magical, but indeed it can be a brutal master.

I take our family life very seriously. Just as elephants do, we work together, learn from each other, protect and guard each other and are immensely loyal. This project is Personal and I believe that is what sets us apart from many others.

I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who has kindly and generously donated, supported and encouraged both myself and my team, on this journey. Our road is one less travelled, but we still have the confidence and fortitude to continue our multifaceted and family driven vision.

My beloved family and I wish you all a glorious and fruitful 2020!

With love and gratitude

Roxy Danckwerts



[www.zimbabweelephantnursery.com](http://www.zimbabweelephantnursery.com)

## The ZEN Nursery in Harare

### Milk Formula



Elephant calves are notoriously difficult to hand raise and feed on artificial formula. The most challenging of all are the neonates, aged between 0 - 6 months. They cannot tolerate conventional human baby formula. Over the past six years, we have struggled endlessly with this particular age group and have lost quite a number of these tinies.

However, during the course of this year, we have been working on a new formula and have achieved remarkable success with it. It is specifically designed for these fragile little tummies and is not causing the massive nutritional diarrhoea that we usually see. Unfortunately, it is massively expensive, so we need your support more than ever, for this particular aspect of the Nursery operation.

### Teething

Teething is a major problem for young elephant calves. Most especially during the first six months, the calves experience tremendous pain, fever and diarrhoea during the cutting of teeth! They need particular care during this time and we have to remain especially vigilant. They also get very depressed, which affects their immune system and they require a lot of stimulation and love to pull them through.



Limpopo (rescued in December 2018) suffered tremendously from teething. He became desperately ill during January and February 2019 and needed constant nursing. Luckily, he is a robust little elephant and once he was through this critical time, he started to absolutely thrive.

Coco, a slightly older calf, who arrived in 2018 also seemed to suffer from dental issues. She lost a vast amount of weight and had constant diarrhoea. We performed X-rays on her and found that her jaw had a small fracture and there was an abscess underneath one of her teeth. The poor girl was in so much pain. With careful treatment and a specific milk formula, Coco eventually managed to overcome her injury and infection, and is now growing apace.



## The Nursery Herd

Moyo, our first rescue, is now six years old. She is an absolute icon and has become the Mother of the Nursery. We honestly would not be able to do our job without her! Moyo, an orphan from a very early age, has an intrinsic empathy with all the young orphans that arrive in the Nursery. They gravitate to her immediately. She blows at them, touches them, embraces them and then absorbs them into her growing gaggle of toddlers! I am absolutely sure that Moyo can count! She will often stop, take a look around, appear as if she is doing a head count to make sure everyone is present, and then move onwards. She breaks up squabbles, she instinctively nurtures when one of her brood is ill, she warns the herd of danger and she protects them from injury or bullying. We all have much to learn from this young lady!



Kukurukura is another integral member of the Nursery Herd. He is approximately 9 years old now. Due to a severe injury to his back leg, we do not feel that he will thrive in our release site, so have kept him back to watch his progress. Kura, manages the young tikes of the herd. The little bulls are often rambunctious little characters, desperate for rough and tumble games! As they may not play these games with the handlers, Kura steps in and plays that role! He is a beautiful gentle giant, kind to everyone (human and animal). As Moyo can be a little spicy from time to time, he is also an excellent foil for her! The two are great friends indeed.



As a result, we have a growing herd of varying ages, united and welcoming to any new arrival. It is quite remarkable how forgiving, warm and kind these animals are to each other. Yes, there are often spats and yells of displeasure, but the rumbles and the constant camaraderie is truly something to behold.

There are currently 13 elephants at the Harare Nursery Division.

## **The Mana Pools Drought**



The devastation from the drought this year has been far reaching. One of the worst areas hit was Mana Pools National Park, which is located on the Zambezi river, on the northern border of Zimbabwe. There is a high concentration of wildlife in that region, within a unique biosphere. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the few National Parks where tourists are able walk unaccompanied in the wild.

Elephants were dramatically affected, particularly lactating females. This sad situation left many calves as orphans and predators were quick to jump in on the weak and dying.

Whilst ZEN is primarily tasked with rescue of elephant calves from man made situations like poaching, it was clear that something needed to be done. ZimParks and local operators on the ground called us in to undertake the rescue of a few calves, who were either stuck in mud or wandering around, clearly alone.

We did seven air rescues out of Mana Pools this year. Of those seven, six survived and are now doing well within the Nursery Herd.

The rescue of an elephant calf is a monumental task involving teamwork and streamlining of protocols, as well as huge resources. We are immensely grateful to all of those who donated generously towards these rescues, and to those who helped with logistics during those events.





After the rescue, the hard work of rehabilitation really starts! All of the calves uplifted were ill, infected, wounded, dehydrated and hypoglycaemic. Our team worked around the clock, under incredibly tough conditions to bring the patients back from the brink.

The road ahead for these rescues is a long one as they WILL be re-wilded. This can take quite a number of years, but we have every confidence that this will happen and that these animals now have a magnificent second chance at a life they deserve, and more.

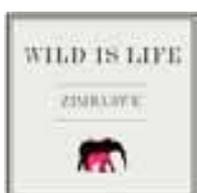
## **Kadiki and Bumi**

I mention these two separately as they are huge achievements for the Nursery. Both calves were rescued as new borns and presented unique challenges. Not only did they have to adapt to the milk formula, they both had injuries that needed intensive care and nursing.

Having to put such young and delicate animals onto antibiotics always fills me with trepidation. The antibiotics and pain management wreak havoc with the digestive system, as well as normal growth patterns and the immune system.

However, we are so pleased to now report that both these calves are thriving and have the characteristic little fat cheeks that indicate a healthy weight. That being said, they are eating us out of house and home!

Each of these two calves have four handlers, working on eight hour shifts throughout the night and day. They are never left alone and rely heavily on their dedicated handlers for comfort, enrichment, feeding, cleaning and care.





## Veterinary

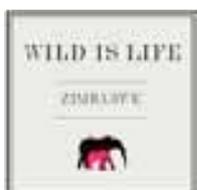
We have made dramatic progress in our veterinary protocols this year, from wound management techniques, therapeutic treatments, diagnostics, recording, blood ranges and anaesthetics.



## The Sanctuary

### Releases

Our small animal releases continue with the successful re-wilding of 4 Pangolin, 4 genets, 2 squirrels, a large number of tortoises, two bush babies, one steenbok and 3 duiker.



## Wild Orphans Received

We received a number of wild orphans this year, mainly handed in by members of the public, who care enough to rescue and then get help. We try to help as many animals as possible. This year we received the following baby orphans:

- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| 6 Galagos        | 4 Genet    |
| 1 Egyptian Goose | 1 Steenbok |
| 1 sable calf     | 2 duiker   |
| 1 Kudu calf      | 1 bush pig |



## Education

We continue to host a large number of school children for educational visits to the Sanctuary. This year we welcomed 960 school children to the Sanctuary, where they learned about endangered species and the importance of their wildlife heritage.



## Cyclone Idai

In January 2019, the Eastern highlands of Zimbabwe was hit by a devastating cyclone. Many, many human lives were lost, homes completely destroyed and livestock was simply washed away. Wild is Life Trust/IFAW stepped up and joined forces with Miracle Missions to assist animals on the ground. We provided a qualified and full time member of our team to work in sorting, purchasing and distributing supplies for affected animals in the region. We also deployed a team up into the affected area, with fresh water, veterinary supplies and food. Access was particularly difficult, as mountainous roads had been washed away. There were few domestic animal survivors, but two of those sad cases, Arthur and Alice, a pair of abused and skeletal donkeys came and joined the Wild is Life Family. They are a daily reminder of how tenuous life can be.



## Predators

An outbreak of Anthrax at the height of the drought brought us some severe stress and sadness. Sadly, Mambo, a dear old friend of 16 years succumbed to the disease. Bones, George and Joe were very ill but we treated them with high dose antibiotics and they recovered. No other animal on the property became infected.

This has been a significant learning experience for us, and the data and knowledge is also being used by the University of Zimbabwe for research purposes.



## Plains Game

Two giraffe calves were born this year, Victoria and Petunia. We had some concerns about Mirabelle's mothering skills, and first time mother Missy. However, both mothers outdid themselves and have proven to be excellent mums. What has been interesting is how they have shared the nursing of their babies, who were born within two months of each other. This is not something that I have seen in giraffe before.



We have also had a large number of kudu and impala born this past year. Some of these will need to be moved to our release site in Panda Masuie,



during 2020, as our carrying capacity is now at its limit.

## Pangolin



We have received a number of pangolin from ZimParks this year, rescued from the wildlife trade. We act as a transit station for ZimParks, caring for and rehabilitating the animals, until they can be released back into the wild. Of significance was the birth of a pup, during her rehabilitation. This was luckily captured on film and is a valuable source of information for those who are studying Pangolin. Sadly, the pup died, but the mother was successfully released. We have worked with REST (Rare and Endangered Species Trust) in Namibia, on the pangolin rehabilitation and they have been enormously helpful to us. Four Pangolin have been successfully released back into the wild.



# Panda Masuie: Re-wilding Project

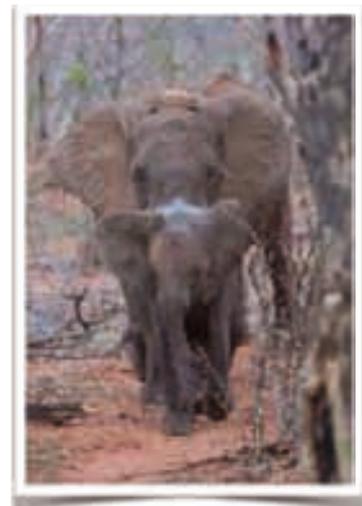
Author: Jos Danckwerts

Wild is Life is leading two ambitious projects in Western Zimbabwe, in partnership with Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe.

Wild is Life, together with IFAW, is leasing and managing the Panda Masuie Forest Reserve. This vital habitat for elephants and other wildlife was previously severely degraded and depleted. Due to the tireless efforts of the ZEN team the forest is recovering strongly and the wildlife is returning to the forest, which is now a place of safety and stability. Panda Masuie Forest is the home of the ZEN Re-Wilding Facility, the first of its kind in the region.



## Elephant Re-Wilding



12 elephants are currently residing at Panda Masuie Forest, where they are undergoing a Re-Wilding process that will enable them to return to the wild.

**A major milestone was reached in May, when two of the elephants (Mfana and Tulku) joined a wild elephant herd and left the facility.**





Tulku returned to the bomas after 6 months in the bush. He is still within the bomas and has re-joined the herd. We foresee him going back to the wild with his adopted herd soon, now that the rains have arrived.

In addition, the ZEN herd are now regularly interacting with wild bulls, who

are visiting the vicinity of the boma area. The direct and unprotected interactions have gone far better than anticipated, with no aggression and much vocalisation. We believe that the specially designed interaction zone (seen above) has directly impacted the positive relationships that are now being forged in the wild sectors.

The elephants are the keystone to the whole project, and have mobilised worldwide attention and support, enabling the broader *restoration work* to take place.

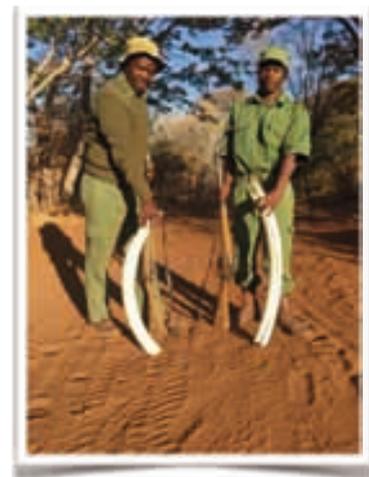
## Forest Protection

The Forest Protection Unit (FPU) has been performing very well and has improved their operations and are getting results. **No elephants have been poached since the inception of the JV in 2017.**

Prior to this many elephants were poached in the reserve (12 adult bulls in the period from 2013-2017). This massive turnaround is critical to the stability of the reserve and is credit to the courageous rangers fighting on the frontline.

In addition, many snares have been recovered and wood poachers arrested.

The ZEN Project (Wild is Life and IFAW) has provided equipment and support to the FPU in the form of rations, uniforms, equipment and radios.



In the year ahead additional investment and training is planned to expand the operation and ensure the continued success of anti poaching activities.



The ZEN Project has invested substantial resources into Panda Masuie Forest to increase the wildlife population and protect the forest, whilst being cognisant of the natural orders of biodiversity.

It must be emphasised that all of the development and running of the project has been done under exceptionally difficult socio-economic circumstances which affect all aspects of the project. In the face of adversity, the Wild is Life team continues to shine, grow and make a real difference for wildlife and the ecosystems they inhabit.

## **Achievements to date**

- Full Operations Base Developed and Functioning including staff accommodation, workshops, manager accommodation, elephant bomas, executive tent etc.
- 10 Boreholes drilled
- 5 boreholes equipped and pumping
- Radio network installed
- Murphys Base renovated
- 30 km new roads constructed



## Employment:



The ZEN project has generated 35 new permanent jobs. This has spinoff benefits for more than 200 people.

The majority of workers come from the neighbouring community, at Woodlands Estate. Many of the employees have received training and capacity building.

Recognising the socio-economic challenges affecting the country this year, Wild is Life took the lead and has been supplying a food hamper to each and every member of staff, each month.



Stable employment created by Wild is Life has had a massive impact on the surrounding communities where unemployment is a big issue.

## Community

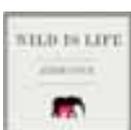
Wild is Life has been extensively working with the neighbouring communities since the inception of the project. In addition to employment opportunities. Investment into livelihoods have been made and supported.



The Livestock Support Program has been the flagship project that is very popular. The dip tank was rehabilitated in January 2019 and the dipping program has been ongoing. Pumps, pipeline and dipping chemical have been provided on a monthly basis, as well as veterinary assistance.

A crush and scale has also been installed and a loading ramp is being built. This will give the

people an opportunity to get fair value for their cattle, increasing their income.



Cattle are the cornerstone of the rural economy and recognising this, Wild is Life aims to increase this impactful program in the years to come.

Wild is Life is also supporting Masuwe Primary School in many ways, including renovating classrooms, providing furniture, building gates and fences, planting trees. The school is a primary school that is very basic but functional. Due to difficult economic conditions in the country, the school is under developed. As such Wild is Life wishes, with the support of its partners, to improve facilities at the school in the future. Many of the staff's children attend the school and as such it is vital to the well being of the project.

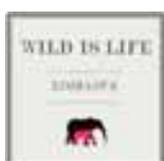
## Game Count

An inaugural game count was conducted on 13th October 2019 and yielded very positive results that we are all very excited about. This was the first time ever that Panda Masuie has been surveyed to such an extent. 4 teams of 3 people each conducted the game count at Murphy's Pan, Lioness Spring, Giraffe Pan and the Pond. This was done over a 24 hour period, during the full moon, from specially constructed blinds in trees.

The results are very encouraging and highlight the reserve to be a vital habitat for elephants and other animals. In addition, numerous camera traps around the property are recording an excellent range of species, indicating a healthy and productive ecosystem.

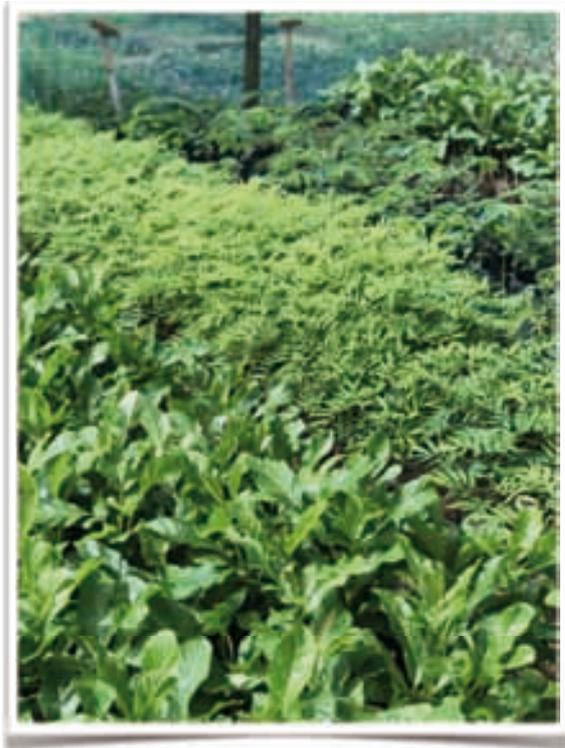
New species are being recorded in the forest using camera traps, that were not known before. These include Painted dog, aardwolf, cheetah, caracal and brown hyena. The presence of such a diversity of species in the forest is highly encouraging and motivating.

<b>PANDA MASUIE GAME COUNT</b>	
<b>OVERALL TOTALS</b>	
ELEPHANT	262
KUDU	131
WARTHOG	32
GIRAFFE	11
DUIKER	8
HYENA	37
JACKAL	2
BAT EARED FOX	1
BABOONS	89
VERVET MONKEY	1
CIVET	1
IMPALA	13
SCRUB HARE	2
WHITE BACKED VULTURE	1
TAWNY EAGLE	1
HAMMERKOP	1
PENNANT WINGED NIGHTJAR	2
HAWK EAGLE	1
BROWN SNAKE EAGLE	1
BLACK CHESTED SNAKE EAG	1
HELMETED GUINEA FOWL	23



## Panda Masuie: Forest Restoration

### Fuller Forest Nursery



Habitat loss, deforestation and degradation is the major long term threat to wildlife across the continent. Recognising this silent and hidden killer, Wild is Life took the initiative to reverse this trend and safeguard wildlife habitat for the future.

Wild is Life's subsidiary; TreeEco, fully funded the construction of a purpose built tree nursery at Fuller Forest in 2018. This consists of 3 primate proof shade houses with irrigation system, a solar pumping system, tank, pumps etc.

The Nursery is wholly run and managed by Forestry Commission staff, based at Fuller Forest, whom have done an excellent job and producing the trees.

Production at Fuller Forest Nursery is very good. A total of 23610 trees have been grown this season and are currently being distributed to communities for planting.

Various tree species are being grown, including indigenous and fruit trees.

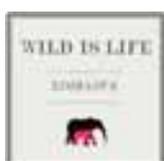
### Tree Planting

With the onset of the rains in December, tree planting began in earnest.

Trees are being distributed around the country, under the auspices of the National Tree Planting Day.

Two trial sites have been identified within Panda Masuie Forest and are being prepared for a restoration research project, in partnership with Forestry Commission. This will guide and inform further restoration projects across the country.

To date, TreeCo has grown over 300 000 trees for distribution around Zimbabwe.



## Mobile Application

A mobile Monitoring Application (App) has been built by Wild is Life/TreeCo over the past three years. This has been a substantial investment. However the process is finally complete and the devices and software are now ready for deployment into the field.

The aim of the App is to:

- Collect and Collate Data on Trees Distributed and the Participating Communities
- Monitor Progress and Survival of Trees
- Measure. Impact of Tree planting
- Track changes on vegetation
- Track changes in livelihoods
- Demonstrate real change
- Garner worldwide support for tree planting in Zimbabwe

## Conclusions

### Challenges

Having had an exponential increase in rescues this year, we have run out of space! Our stables are packed to the brim and some calves are having to share stables. This will improve somewhat when we move some the older calves up to our release site, but we do anticipate another influx of rescues next year, as the drought worsens.

We are constantly training new staff, but this takes time.

Our veterinary consumables have been flattened this year too and we hope to slowly build up our stocks, as the year unfolds.

As another year goes by we observe new threats and challenges facing Forests, Biodiversity and People. The work and role of Forestry Commission and ZimParks is more vital than ever, we recognise this and this is what drives us.

### Looking forward

As we move through to 2020, we look to strengthen our relationships with partners and collaborators, with whom we have firm bonds. As a family, we are committed to our

contribution to Zimbabwe's rich biodiversity and most especially her elephants and her trees. We are excited to keep building on the solid foundations that we have thus far created and will focus our energy on vertically enhancing our structures and protocols.

## **Culture of Care**

Changing perceptions within a traditionally "sustainable use" culture is difficult. We continue to work towards our philosophy of a "culture of care" within Zimbabwe, slowly winning hearts and minds as we ACT upon our visions and aspirations.



## **Gratitude**

We are hugely grateful to you, our wonderful and generous supporters, without whom we could not have developed and grown this project into the authentic reality of today. We hope that you will continue to follow our journey and support us, in any way that you can!

We make particular mention of the following Donors, Conservation Partners and Trustees, with thanks:

***IFAW- International Fund for Animal Welfare***

***The Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe***

***Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority***

***Future for Elephants e.V.***

***Rettet Die Elefanten Afrikas e.V.***

**Mr James Costa**

**Dr Wolfgang Hennig**

**Ms Liz Pidgeon (in memory of Sir John Pidgeon)**

**Wild is Life USA**

**Mr Harry Sutherland**

**Mr Greg Mertz**

**Mr Bruce Roberts**

**Mr Donal Boyd**



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**PhotoCredits:**

Donal Boyd

Roger Allen

CutVisuals

Jens Cullmann