



George Adamson
Wildlife Preservation Trust

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Dear Supporters,

Many of you will be aware of the discussions and negotiations which have been taking place for the last twelve months with the Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) and the time has now come to bring our supporters up to date formally.

Briefly the history is as follows. In October 2018 TANAPA announced they intended to take a substantially greater role in the management and running of the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary (55 square kilometres, now containing over thirty rhinos) and the Wild Dog Breeding Project. This was sad but equally was inevitable after GAWPT's extraordinary stewardship over thirty years.

Our projects themselves are highly successful and have become an international model for conservation. We obviously wished to ensure that the eventual handover should be as orderly as possible. The Tanzanian Trust (supported by us) and Tony Fitzjohn have spent a year negotiating the terms of the handover which include the transfer of large amounts of plant, vehicles, infrastructure and equipment and the transfer of most of our staff to TANAPA. This process now appears to be close to a conclusion and a formal handover agreement was signed at a ceremony in Arusha. It includes a period of residence and consultation by Tony and the completion of substantial and important upgrades to the rhino sanctuary fences.

The handover ceremony itself involved Tony, Lucy and Elisaria and representatives of the Tanzanian Trust including the chairman Bernard Mchomvu, many of the trustees and our lawyers, the board of trustees of TANAPA chaired by the former Chief of the Defence Forces of Tanzania, General George Waitara (rtd), the Conservation Commissioner of TANAPA, Dr Allan Kijazi and the senior management staff. There were many speeches, all of which recognised the massive contribution which Tony, Lucy, Elisaria and the Trusts have made to the rehabilitation of Mkomazi. It would never have happened without them. A copy of Tony's speech is attached. We would urge you to read it as an eloquent testament to an extraordinary endeavour.

Fortuitously, on our last formal day a rhino calf was born in the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary and yet another was born in the New Year bringing numbers to 34. Also on the last formal day a herd of over 300 elephant with many young were seen from the air. During the same week, one recently reintroduced pack of wild dogs was seen about 10 kilometres from our camp all in good health, and on the same day a pair of mating lions were spotted close to Dindira Dam. Photographs are attached to this report and they are a graphic testimony to successful achievement.

FIELD DIRECTOR A.R. Fitzjohn OBE

PATRON HRH Princess Michael of Kent

TRUSTEES R.G. Marshall-Andrews QC - Chairman

Pj. Chauveau A.A.S. Harbord B. Jackman A.F.T. Marrian A.S. Mortimer T.N.D. Peet J. Rendall J.M.A. Thomson A.K. Toulson PR. Wakeham

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The Future

It is our intention to transfer the Trusts' operations (and Tony and Lucy) to the rehabilitation of Kora National Park in Kenya where Tony spent 18 years with George Adamson. The park is in a very poor state not dissimilar to Mkomazi prior to the contribution of the GAWPTs in the UK and the USA. This is set out in a briefing paper which was prepared recently and which is attached. This forms a daunting but exciting challenge on a huge scale. Meetings have taken place with the Kenya Wildlife Services and a Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted. Management plans have been created which include the creation of Sanctuary areas for the remaining wildlife.

In the immediate future we plan to hold a reception to celebrate the huge success of Mkomazi and to introduce this new Project. It is of course our hope that our many friends and donors will continue to support us in this new endeavour. The achievements of the past thirty years have relied entirely on that unstinting support which has created an international beacon for the rescue and rehabilitation of the wild environment and the wildlife that remains.

The Trust has met regularly in the past year but the continuing nature of the negotiations has precluded detailed information to our friends and donors until now. The developments are of course tinged with sadness but the work that Tony and the Trusts were asked to do thirty years ago has been a massive success. When we finally hand over it will be on the basis of extraordinary achievement due in no small measure to many donors and friends including yourself to whom we are very grateful.

Best wishes as ever,

Bob Marshall-Andrews QC
Chairman
George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trust



Handover of the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary and Wild Dog Breeding Programmes from Wildlife Preservation Trust Fund to Tanzania National Parks.

TANAPA HQ, Arusha, Tanzania.

Tony Fitzjohn's speech

General Waitara, Members of The Board, Dr Kijazi, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1989 I received a letter from the Director of Wildlife of Tanzania. It was an invitation to assist in the restoration and rehabilitation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, 3,270 sq kilometers of wilderness and spectacular landscape which together with Tsavo National Park in Kenya forms one of the largest protected ecosystems in Africa.

It was a daunting task. By 1989 the Reserve was in a dire state of neglect - widespread commercial poaching and the massive illegal incursion of cattle had degraded the land and reduced the abundant wildlife to near extinction. What wildlife remained was pursued by sport hunters of doubtful integrity.

And so for us, thirty years ago, The Mkomazi Project was born. The Wildlife Division Project Manager, Hezekiah Mungure, had started working on the Project the year before and it was a huge relief and pleasure for us to work with such a dedicated, knowledgeable and long-serving wildlife officer here.

In the beginning the Trust had two assets of limited value: me, and a Massey Ferguson tractor purchased with a bank loan guaranteed by the trustees of the newly formed GAWPT in the UK. Both of us are thirty years older, both of us have required increasingly serious maintenance but we have both contributed in our own way to the extraordinary story of conservation and regeneration which followed and which has become a model throughout Africa. But I did not do it alone.

First, I had the most skilled, adaptable, tough and dedicated Tanzanian staff led by the inspirational Elisaria Nnko, without whom nothing would have been achieved. His commitment, integrity and ability to put a team together and keep them together has been the binding force for 30 years and without him I would have been lost. He has also made me a better man.

This team grew over thirty years to over 50 with mechanics, plant operators, rhino trackers, fence teams, wild dog keepers and tracker dog handlers and ... well ... whatever it took to get the job done ...

We were so very fortunate here in Tanzania to have the best guidance and true friendship from our Chairmen and trustees Bernard Mchomvu, Kinemo Kihomano, Rose Lugembe, Iddi Mbita and Charles Dobie – most of whom are here today, along with Elisaria.

And to our Chairmen and Trustees who have given us so much but sadly passed on – Brigadier General Hashim Mbita, Solomon Liani, Costa Mlay; in Kenya, Palle Rune; and in England, Dr Keith Eltringham – I take this opportunity to pay my deepest thanks and respects and with the hope that we'll all meet up again in the Afterlife.

The George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trusts in the UK and USA recruited friends and supporters from many backgrounds dedicated to the endeavour. Their generous contributions provided the base from which our part of the Project started. Small beginnings. As the project grew, many other wonderful supporters contributed on an international basis. And of course, we have worked together with the Wildlife Division and particularly since Mkomazi's designation as a National Park, with TANAPA, the partners to whom we now pass on the Project and all its responsibilities and under whom we have seen the Park taking great strides towards its former glory.

I would like to emphasise that this project has been a wonderful success and Lucy and I would like to thank Dr. Allan Kijazi for his years of understanding and support and more recently Chief Park Warden Abel Mtui who has made this last year as comfortable as he can for us. Most of all - of course - and far more important than the tractor - has been the non-stop administrative support of my wife Lucy. We don't have the privilege and comforts of town offices here staffed with experts – it's all done from our camp. Just the two of us and Elisaria. Lucy's daily input has kept us functioning in a modern world that seems keener on paperwork than fieldwork, as well as raising 4 children in a remote and lonely environment since they were all a month old. We all owe her a huge debt.

And The Mkomazi Project has been, indeed, the most extraordinary success. It has included the construction of 800 kms of roads; the re-clearing of boundaries; dam de-silting and construction; the installation of radio networks; drilling for water and underground storage tanks; the clearing and maintenance of essential airstrips and fire breaks; the establishment of a base camp; over 3,000 hours of aircraft patrols and surveys; GPS mapping of the infrastructure, deployment of many vehicles and plant machinery, most donated by supporters and friends; the construction of a purpose built workshop and the setting up of the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary.

This work, in partnership firstly with the Wildlife Division and then TANAPA, led to spectacular changes in the habitat and the wildlife populations of Mkomazi. Illegal grazing and indiscriminate burning has now been largely eradicated. Wildlife has returned in substantial numbers, in particular, the elephant. By 1989 their numbers had been reduced to just 11 individuals. Now up to 600 elephant have been counted during the wet

season. Even five days ago we saw well over 300 with young, in one relaxed herd near Maore Ndogo.

This transformation has included intensive programmes to preserve endangered species, centered on the Black Rhino and African Wild Dog.

The Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary has been constructed covering 55 square kilometers. Through a series of complex international operations 15 black rhinos were translocated to the Sanctuary from South Africa, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. The breeding population is now 33, with many pregnant females. I cannot emphasise enough how much we owe to the teams that started off digging the fence post holes and then moved on to become the rhino trackers and fence repair and maintenance gangs in both difficult and arduous conditions. And our early-days security, recruited by Brigadier General Hashim Mbita, resulted in us being one of the very few rhino facilities in Africa that hasn't lost a rhino to poaching.

The African Wild Dog programme has taken a long term view to the survival of this species with continued breeding and releases back to the wild with over 200 dogs being reintroduced into the Mkomazi / Tsavo ecosystem. We estimate that there is a good survival rate that then carries on breeding and there have been increased sightings of wild dog packs in the ecosystem.

If any real impact is going to be made for the sake of these endangered species, these have to be programmes that go on forever.

Our outreach programmes have become role models for conservation within communities. They include the construction of a secondary school in Kisiwani village with science labs, computer rooms, a headmaster's house and staff quarters. In the village of Gonja, we helped to construct and equip a Vocational Training Centre and secondary school with capacity for 300 students. Classrooms have been constructed in 32 other schools. The Rhino Sanctuary has an environmental educational centre with full audio/visual equipment. Children arrive in a 28 seater bus lead by Elisaria together with our head rhino tracker. It's important that the school children, teachers and community leaders that attend this programme every year interact with those actually doing the job on the ground.

I have been fortunate to receive a few awards but I am well aware that these awards were not just for me but for the magnificent team, partners, supporters and friends who together have made the success of the Project an international model for rehabilitation and conservation.

But now the time has come for us to leave after 30 years. As we do this, it is both a cause for celebration and, for me and my family, a time of great sadness. We hand over the projects to TANAPA in the best possible order and with all our dedicated staff, along with the necessary infrastructure, plant machinery, vehicles and equipment to ensure the continued success of a Project which demonstrates above all that with total dedication, and together, it is possible to reverse what at times appears to be the catastrophic and inevitable process of the degradation of the Natural World.

On behalf of myself, my family, Wildlife Preservation Trust Fund, the George Adamson Wildlife Preservation Trusts in the UK and the USA and our many wonderful supporters and friends, I wish you all the very best of luck.