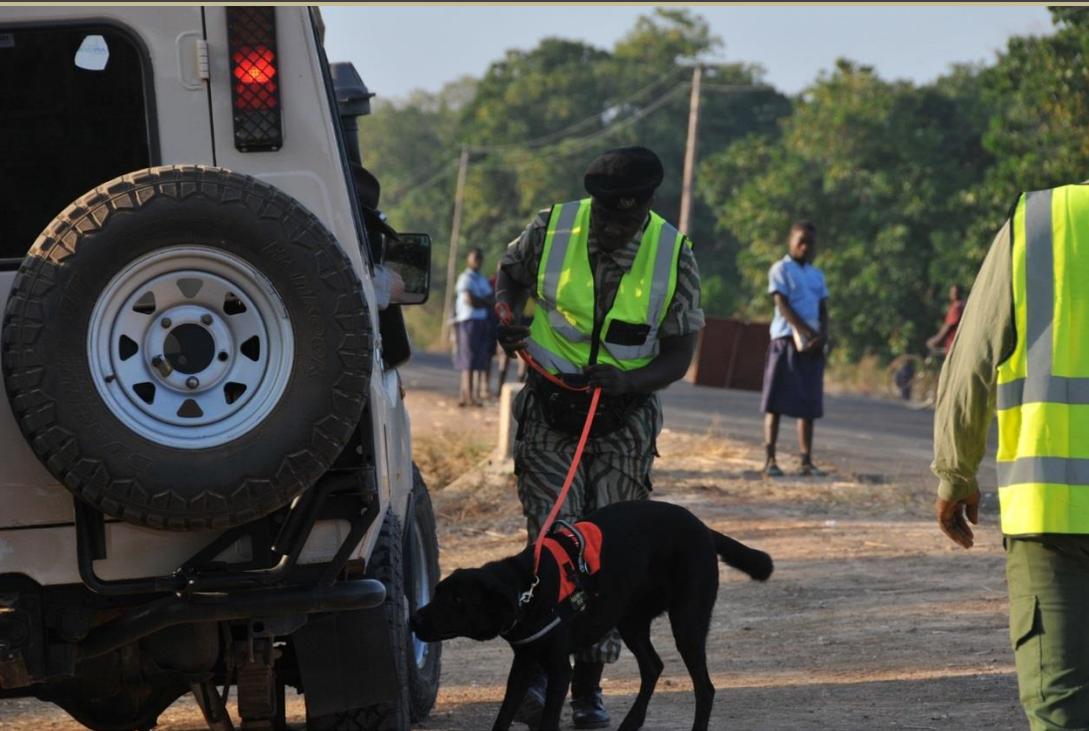


SLCS NEWSLETTER Edition 1



*Generously supported by
the following 2015 major
donors:*

**Luangwa Conservation
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Members: Flatdogs Camp,
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Safaris, Croc Valley Camp, Lion
Camp & Norman Carr Safaris.



Photo by Renaud Fulconis

From Rachel McRobb

CEO SLCS



To all our friends, donors and partners,

So much has happened this year that I won't be able to fit it in this newsletter alone so I'll concentrate on the main highlights and save the rest for a Christmas update.

Firstly, a very big thank you to everyone who continues to support our work. Despite fundraising being competitive, tough and time consuming, this year we have had extraordinary responses and support from all our major donors with very positive feedback on grant applications, and also the personal support and donations from many of you who know what a special place Luangwa is.



We were extremely honored to be invited to Windsor Castle for TUSK Trusts 25th anniversary in May this year. The event was hosted by Prince William and was a once in a lifetime experience and I felt truly privileged to be there mingling with Royalty, celebrities and millionaires!! TUSK Trust support a variety of programs in Africa protecting wildlife and supporting communities and have been supporting SLCS for five years.

When going to Windsor Castle, one has to look the part.

The detection dog program goes from strength to strength despite some major initial setbacks and causes for distress and heartache. I was out recently with the team on a snap roadblock operation and while talking to the team, I asked them if the program has changed the way they look at dogs in general. Godfrey replied 'we Zambians usually don't care about our dogs that much and have them for security only, I never believed that a dog can enter my heart the way these have, they have really become my friends and co-workers'. That says it all, once you cement that grounding, work and play just becomes easier and more fun. I am still absolutely astounded at the way the handlers have bonded with the dogs and the attention and care they give them is something I notice daily.

Flatdogs Camp
South Luangwa National Park - Zambia



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL



Zambian
CARNIVORE PROGRAMME



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REMOTE AFRICA
Safaris

We are greatly indebted to the following donors and partners for the implementation and running of the detection dog program.



Reward time for Chai



We'd like to thank WD4C for being such outstanding partners in this project and always available for advice and help and we look forward to seeing them back in October.



Steve and Godfrey

Update from the South Luangwa Canine Unit

It's been almost one year since the arrival of the first wildlife trafficking detection dogs in South Luangwa and there has been many trials, tears and tribulations since then.

Sadly, only four months into the program Steve was diagnosed with trypanosomiasis (African animal sleeping sickness) which quickly progressed to his CNS and he subsequently had to be euthanized as there is no cure at this stage of the disease. As expected the team was devastated at this loss and we questioned continuing with the program. After many months of research and consultations, we developed a protocol for managing tryps as best as possible in a tsetse challenged area.

Despite this huge setback we have since received two new detection dogs from our partners in the US, Working Dogs for Conservation. Two young Dutch shepherds, Chai and Earl arrived in Zambia in June 2015 and have firmly settled in and bonded with their handlers.

Ruger continues to be what the handlers call 'The Boss or Headman' and all three have developed in to exceptional working dogs, loving what they do and generating great results including the detection of multiple illegal firearms, bush meat and ivory leading to the apprehension of many suspects.

Trypanosomiasis continues to be a major challenge for us but with the excellent team in place and the support of Dr Sichande (SLCS/ZCP vet) and Dr Ian Parsons (SLCS trustee) the dogs are in the best possible hands.

Update from SLCS Vet Unit

SLCS and ZCP continue to provide the only full time veterinary presence in the Luangwa Valley. Dr Sichande efficiently conducts both field based wildlife veterinary activities and additionally assists ZCP with applied research operations including collaring valuable species for long term monitoring. He also provides support to the local community for domestic animals. Dr Sichande has been with SLCS and ZCP now for just over two years and we are thrilled that he has renewed his contract for another two years. His vast experience and knowledge is critical to the often dangerous wildlife veterinary work we undertake.

At the SLCS clinic Dr Sichande is readily available when he is not in the field to attend to various cases and this year has been involved in patients (dogs) with snake bites, broken limbs, punctured organs, eye enucleations, micro chipping, poisoning, diseases including Parvo virus, TVT and sleeping sickness and has also performed many sterilizations.

This year SLCS bought a compound microscope, centrifuge and haematocrit for the diagnostics of haemoparasites and other pathogens as part of the detection dog disease protocols.



International



We observed minimal incidences of snaring during the initial months of 2015 which is typical during the wet green season. As we are now well in to the hot dry season with sparse water available, snaring reports and activities have increased dramatically. Sightings by anti-snaring scouts and safari guides are quickly passed on to SLCS, ZCP and the Zambia Wildlife Authority for our action. Wild dogs and lions continue to be heavily affected by snaring and combined efforts with ZCP's research staff, our combined aircraft and ground teams have ensured we rescue most of the snared carnivores observed.



Visitors and partnerships

On an annual basis, we have many visitors throughout the year but a number of important visitors have been to Luangwa this year.



In July 2015, SLCS was lucky to host Dr Michelle Campbell, veterinarian from Taronga's Western Plains Zoo for two weeks. Within two days of arriving Michele joined and helped SLCS's

Dr Sichande on the immobilisation and rescue of a badly snared wild dog. Michelle also lent her veterinary expertise to our detection dog handlers, hosting an afternoon's workshop on domestic dog care and emergencies. Aside from a professional collaboration, we are grateful to have found a new friend and colleague at Taronga.



United States Fish and Wildlife Services

has been funding SLCS for a number of years and their African Elephant Programs Officer, Michelle Gadd visited our detection dog program this year. It was great to have Michelle with us for a few days and show her what they are funding in addition to being updated on USFW Africa wide work on elephant and rhino conservation.



Painted Dog Inc Tour Group July 2015

John and Ange Lemon, founders and directors in Painted Dog Inc in Australia have been staunch supporters of SLCS anti-snaring work and in July John led a group of ten to South Luangwa to see SLCS, ZCP and Chipembele, all recipients of PDC funding. John and Ange's passionate and tireless efforts in fundraising to support conservation efforts in Zambia are deeply appreciated.



Struan McDougall, CCG Trust, another valuable SLCS supporter, also visited SLCS in this year. Struan had not been for many years and was delighted to see the progress we have made since his last visit eight years ago. It's always a pleasure to show our supporters around.



Awelys Red Caps – Solutions to human-wildlife

The team of Awely Red Caps, led by Billy Banda has been involved in activities ranging from raising awareness about solutions to human-wildlife conflicts to the production of crops, which are less or not attractive to elephants. One of the most innovative approaches of this project is the operation of a “Pilot Conflict Free Zone”. Around the Lupande Farming Block, close to Daniel village, ten watchtowers were erected by farmers, who took turns in guarding from the beginning of 2015 onwards. They were supported by two teams of chilli bombers and managed to chase away elephants daily. The farmers of this farming block guarded by the community explained that their harvest this year was much less affected by elephants. Draught however, caused larger losses. As farmers urge to continue and intensify this guarding system, the Red Caps are currently preparing the construction of further watchtowers. In June, the team welcomed a group from Maisons du Monde and Renaud Fulconis, Awely’s Executive Director. Maisons du Monde has been supporting this programme for two years now.





2015 Annual SLCS Fun Run

Another great success with over 300 runners and 3500 people during the day.

Congratulations to Bernard Bwalya on the right from Lusaka for his outstanding 1st place and winner of the Chris Fenner Conservation Cup in memory of Chris Fenner.

The 7th SLCS annual 10km Fun Run was held in June. This year we introduced the Chris Fenner Conservation Cup for the overall winner who was Bernard Bwalya in 33 minutes. As usual we also had a fantastic day of other sports events including tug of war, netball, volley ball, football, relays, entertainment from the fabulous SEKA drama group and food and drinks stalls run by local entrepreneurs.





Law Enforcement support from the Operations Manager Benson Kanyembo.

This report comes from a remote training camp in the field where I am currently assisting ZAWA instructors in training new village scouts to increase the wildlife law enforcement personnel. This training takes place over three months and is an intense para-military course. So far, more than 20 students did not pass the first selection board. As we know only the fittest survive this training but we expect to end with more than 40.

In February this year we welcomed our new pilot SLCS / ZCP pilot Derick Lombard. Derick grew up on a farm in South Africa and is the perfect person for the job, young, enthusiastic, keen to lend his hand to anything and a hard worker. Also an excellent pilot, he takes great interest in conservation and all SLCS activities. Derick's aerial surveillance patrols quickly led to results including spotting of poachers from the air and directing patrols on the ground to these areas.

The village scouts we support have conducted 70 x 10 day long patrols this year, 85 day patrols, 9 short patrols and 58 road block with results including 100 snares, 51 suspects and 30 illegal firearms.



Whilst elephant poaching remains a challenge, we are trying to assist ZAWA in many ways in their efforts to combat this. Most recently we have received support from Save the Elephants and WCN to increase efforts in intelligence and investigations gathering. This support is much appreciated and greatly needed.



With only a few months of the year left to go, the hot dry season is always our most challenging but we hope to bring you good news at the end of the year.

With best wishes from the SLCS team.