

April 2008 - Dear Everybody!

NORTH LUANGWA

The elephants of North Luangwa in Zambia are still safe and recovering slowly from the heavy poaching of the 1980's. The Park is now one of the most secure in Africa with astounding wildlife. Visitors hardly believe that when we first arrived in 1986 poachers were shooting 1,000 elephants a year, that up to 100,000 had already been slaughtered, and that survivors ran at the sight of humans. Today NLNP is truly a wilderness paradise.



AWARDS: This success is certainly because Hammer Simwinda and his *Foundation for Wildlife and Habitat Conservation* continue the work we began – so well that he has won the *National Geographic Emerging Explorers Award* which “recognizes and supports uniquely gifted and inspiring adventurers, scientists, photographers and storytellers making a significant contribution to world knowledge through exploration...” Hammer was in Washington, DC in April with other recipients and received a \$10,000 grant to help save wildlife by helping rural people. Last April Hammer won the prestigious *Goldman Environmental Prize for Africa*; followed in October 2007 by *Time Magazine's* International Edition *Environmental Hero Award*, recognizing people who ‘speak for the planet’. Congratulations Hammer!

Thanks to your support for 22 years of sustained, enviro-friendly development work in the North Luangwa area, thousands of people have sustainable agriculture, basic health care, education and jobs as farmers, bee keepers, fish farmers, and oil press operators rather than relying on poaching for their food and livelihoods. Here are some recent success stories...

SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS: In our last *Dear Everybody* we mentioned Bernard Mutondo, one of the most infamous poachers in North Luangwa. He had shot many elephants, but asked us for a loan for carpentry tools so that he could give up poaching. We sent those tools from our Georgia office and now Bernard has begun his new career, as have so many other former poachers assisted by the Project. We told him that it was unnecessary to put up the 9 pigs and 25 chickens he offered as collateral, and instead he is helping Hammer build beehives and campsites for project visitors -- bringing 4 young ‘would be poachers’ as his helpers. These five men turned away from poaching to work for the good of their people and their wildlife.



Peace Corps volunteer, Tracy Grainger recently finished her posting in a North Luangwa village. She joined Hammer, who supplied training and materials to help a new village of 10 to 20 families give up destructive slash-and-burn agriculture. From Tracy: ***"The community started inviting me to meetings at the local wildlife and conservation development clubs...Initially set up by Mark and Delia Owens ...in the 1980s..."*** After a long day of discussions with villagers, Hammer dismantled Tracy's bicycle, strapped it to the back bumper of his OFWC motorbike, and gave her a ride: ***"Instead of riding off into the sunset...to relative comfort...we stayed the night...with a Club leader in the next village over. Tired as we were, Hammer was still able to show positive motivation toward every idea... and every scenario brought to him by this woman and her approaching neighbors. Another man came, saying "I have a piece of land from the Chief just there...." He pointed up and over the hut, to a distant place where few were settled. "I can take you there tomorrow." Hammer agreed, and the***

next morning...we continued...to a start-up farm project that was all vision and no resources."

During Hammer's US visit in April we all stayed with Mary and Bobby in our Atlanta area home-office and we had the chance to share many success stories. Particularly poignant is that of two North Luangwa project loan recipients who are now able to pool their resources and buy a diesel-powered grinding mill on their own. This may not sound like much to some but in Zambia it is a monster venture-capital deal. When we installed the first mills in remote villages so long ago we never imagined that these grassroots programs would succeed to such an extent. Again, you – our supporters - have empowered so much good.

Hammer and Mary cut a wide swath through the shopping centers of Atlanta searching for those exotic things (by bush standards) that Hammer needs for his village work. For example, after combing hardware stores to no avail, we purchased online a *Budding Knife* – used to safely remove budding tree limbs from fruit trees in order to start a new sapling. Hammer grinned broadly when it arrived by Fed X the next day: He has started five community tree nurseries to reforest areas stripped for firewood and the fruit trees provide not only fruit for the people but pollen for the honey bees being nurtured in hives all around the area.

Delia's twin brother Bobby – our volunteer web master and computer expert - took on the job of spiffing up Hammer's *Bush Computer*. Many hours of research and upgrading sent Hammer home with a rejuvenated laptop donated two years ago by Peggy

and Marc Faucher who have also sent Hammer a USB Hard Drive and a GSM phone. This technology has been invaluable as has the digital camera donated to Hammer last year by Nikon Precision which created some of the pictures included here.

EDUCATION: Hammer is starting a “Junior Ranger Program” to allow students to study the animals, plants and environmental needs of their area during school vacations. He is modeling it after America’s Boy and Girl Scout programs, so he took Bobby’s well worn Scout Leader’s Handbook back to Zambia with him. Local seamstresses will make the uniform shirts and neckerchiefs for these future conservationists. We also bought a wood burning tool to make wooden signs identifying trees and bushes. Hammer needs funds for the uniforms and education materials. Funding is also needed for Scholarships to cover food and lodging for the children while they are away from their remote homes. For a relatively small amount we can give these children a helping hand towards a better future for themselves and their wildlife.

HAMMER’S TRUCK: There is more good news. Thanks to your support and a grant from *The Prince Bernhard Fund for Nature* of the Netherlands, Hammer was able to buy a heavy-duty truck to reach remote villages with training and supplies. Even after the Prince’s death this amazing man touches the future as he steadfastly touched our past. Of course, it will cost a great deal to operate the truck with diesel fuel costing up to \$10 a gallon in Mpika, and tires many times more expensive than here in the US.

RURAL HEALTH: Hammer also left with a sewing pattern from Wal-Mart – so that North Luangwa women’s sewing groups can make ‘scrubs’ in bright Chitenge cloth for the *Traditional Birth Attendants* (TBAs) – uniforms they will wear with pride as they serve their villages with medical care. Our TBA’s assisted in 120 healthy births and referred a number of mothers to the government hospital. They also taught Family Planning, Early Childhood Development, Hygiene and First Aid. Older TBA’s are retiring and we need to train more to continue this successful program. Your donations are greatly needed AND appreciated.

Mobile Clinic An unexpected opportunity has come our way. A Catholic Mission in Lusaka has an incredible heavy-duty Unimog truck (required for bush travel) that was donated to them and is a fully equipped mobile clinic – complete with x-ray, surgical table, refrigeration, dental treatment equipment and more. The Nuns were never able to utilize the clinic and are offering it to Hammer for a mere \$15,000. It originally cost in excess of \$150,000. Hammer has worked successfully to de-stigmatize HIV testing in the villages, but the challenge for distant villagers is making up to a 100 kilometer journey on foot to a testing center in Mpika, and then waiting a week for test results – if the testing kits are even available. If we are able to fund the Mobile Clinic the Registered Nurse stationed in Mpika can be taken to the villagers with testing kits for HIV and TB and she can deal with a host of other medical issues as well. Thanks to former US Ambassador to Zambia and now Emory University Professor Gordon Streeb - while Hammer was in Atlanta we had meetings with the Emory Public Health Department to explore ways to have Emory volunteer medical, nursing and other students come to Mpika to staff the Mobile Clinic and conduct research. We also received amazing tips from Emory’s MD specialist in HIV/AIDS who is conducting research in Zambia. We need your help to purchase and run this Mobile Clinic. Healthy, successful people will provide a buffer to commercial poachers thereby saving the elephants of North Luangwa.



ELEPHANTS: Elephants in North Luangwa are safe for now. Our model for rural development based on sound conservation principles is working and being replicated in other areas. But, as you know there is concern about ongoing poaching of elephants throughout Africa and Asia. Large shipments of poached ivory are regularly confiscated around the globe, such as the 880 kilogram seizure in China in March. The United Nation’s *Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species* (CITES) controls the commercial trade in ivory and is allowing limited sales of ivory stockpiles held by some countries. Just this week Botswana has been given clearance by CITES to sell 43.6 tons of stockpiled ivory. Elephants continue to die in unsustainable numbers for the sake of ornamentation. Please contact the *US Fish and Wildlife Service* or your home country

CITES representative, and the CITES Secretariat and ask for a complete ban on the trade in ivory. Without a market, poachers will not be encouraged to kill elephants. Even the *hope* of a market spurs expanded poaching. Please contact the following:

- **CITES Secretariat:** 15, Chemin des Anemones -- Case Postale 456, CH-1219 -- Chatelaine -- Geneva, Switzerland. PHONE: 4122-979-9139-40, FAX: 4122-797-3417, EMAIL: cites@unep.ch
- **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service** -- 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 432 -- Arlington, Virginia 22203

It is such a joy to know that the work we started so many years ago continues to benefit the people and wildlife of Zambia. Of course, it is still a daily challenge to build a balance between human and wildlife communities for the good of all. We can’t do it without your help and we are daily thankful for your caring and generosity.

NORTH IDAHO

WOLVES! Meanwhile back in the western United States, Mark and I occasionally heard wolves howling through the mountain passes that overlooked a wetland we had restored. Now and then we would see the male and female that we saw last year. She is blonde; he is coal black with intense yellow eyes. We had seen tracks of more than two wolves, and wondered if they had pups, but all winter did not see them. Then last week as Mark and I observed a meadow, he called out, “Look, there’re the wolves, and their pups!” The male and female were trotting across the snow trailed by three solid black pups. The youngsters tumbled and play-fought like puppies, running across long stretches of snowy meadow. It seemed that we had gone back in time, a hundred years or more, to see wolves being wolves, romping and chasing each other on land that is wild and safe.

After nearly an hour of play, the pups settled down, and the family of five trotted on across the meadow into the forest. As the sun set that evening, the five of them raised their muzzles and howled. Their song was deep yet fragile, stirring yet mournful as it cut through the mist like voices from the past, yearning to be free. We looked for them the next day, but they had moved on.

We know that the recovery of wolves in this country is controversial; we know that not all people share the joy of seeing them, or even want them to recover. But as I watched them in that snowy land, I thought that surely there is enough space in our country and our hearts to share with other species; that surely we can do what it takes to ensure their survival. Do we want to say we lived in a time when elephants and wolves left this earth forever?

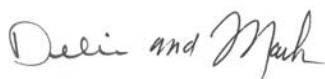


STARBUCK’S MOOSE! One of our friends was buying coffee in a Starbucks in North Idaho when she saw a moose trotting across the parking lot. He had been hanging around town surviving on domestic shrubbery because of the above average snowfall in the area. A few days later we were in Atlanta visiting with Hammer when my cell phone rang, and my neighbor who takes care of our horses while we are away said, “Delia I can’t feed your horses because there’s a moose in your barn!” We can’t know for sure if it was the same moose, but he seemed to have decided that our barn was a spa that had all the comforts he needed – hay, water, shelter, (although no coffee) and had bedded down to stay awhile. The horses were not thrilled with their barn-guest, and stood out in the pasture as far away as they could get. The moose refused to budge, so our neighbors had to walk our horses to their place over snowy roads, and the moose had the spa to himself. When we came back he was still around, and after we moved our horses home, he broke down their fence in three places. I guess we will name him Coffee; we already named a lion Starbuck.

Funding Needed: We hate to beat this drum so often and hard - but it is absolutely true that to assure protection of these amazing animals we need to raise substantial amounts of money including \$5,000 to fund a grizzly/huckleberry survey. Thank you for whatever you can give. We will put it to the best use possible.

We appreciate everything you do to help us make sure there is a place for elephants, wolves, and moose.

Cheers,



Delia and Mark

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Notes from Mary and Tammy: Hammer is not the only award winner! *The Living Desert Museum* of Palm Desert, California honored Mark and Delia with their sixth annual “Tracks in the Sand” Award for their lifetime achievement in wildlife research and conservation. Congratulations Mark and Delia.

Thanks to East Georgia College for sponsoring a lecture by Delia and Mark in March. It was beautifully coordinated and a great experience for all. Contact Mary or Tammy if you are interested in sponsoring a lecture by Delia and Mark. Cost includes \$7,000 lecture fee plus travel and accommodation expenses.

HOW TO HELP

- **NEW EMAIL OR POST ADDRESSES:** Please advise any changes in your contact information as soon as possible. It saves money and makes us 😊!
- **DONATION BY CREDIT CARD:** Can be made at www.owens-foundation.org via **DONATE NOW BUTTON** or by calling Tammy Johnson (678-648-1267). Three percent of your donation goes to the credit card company for processing fees. You will be asked for the security code on your credit card as an added level of protection for you.
- **FOREIGN CURRENCY DONATIONS:** Must be made by wire transfer, US dollar money order or check - or by credit card (see above for online donations). Thank you for the extra effort!
- **PURCHASES** via OF webpage link www.owens-foundation.org to www.amazon.com generate income for our work.
- **RECYCLE USED CELL PHONES:** See our web page link under the **How to Help** section to easily recycle cell phones at no charge and make dollars for OFWC at the same time.
- **NORTH LUANGWA TOURISM:** If you are planning a trip to Africa, you will have the experience of a lifetime AND help people and save wildlife by choosing North Luangwa. For more information, see our web links under NLNP Tourism Info.

LEGACY PLANNING: Touch the future by including the Owens Foundation in your Estate Planning.

Contact Tammy Johnson for more information:

- **Will, Living Trust or other plan:** Name the OFWC as a recipient of a fixed amount or a percent of your estate.
- **Annuity or Life Insurance Policy:** Designate OFWC
- **Retirement Plans:** Designate OFWC as a beneficiary of all or a percentage of your Retirement Plan.

MATCHING DONATIONS:

Some companies match employee & retiree donations to 501(c) (3) nonprofits such as the Owens Foundation. Multiply your giving and empower conservation.

RECOMMEND A FRIEND:

Let us know of anyone who shares our love of people, wild places and wildlife. We never share our database with anyone - ever.

DONATIONS FOR NORTH LUANGWA: Thanks to all who have shipped school, craft & medical supplies to North Luangwa. They are GREATLY needed and appreciated. More are still needed.

IMPORTANT: The US Postal Service has eliminated all reasonably priced shipments outside the US and the only option for shipping to North Luangwa is very expensive AIRMAIL. Please check the cost of shipping before going forward with a project and keep weight in mind!

School Supplies: Crayons, pens, pencils, erasers, chalk, wildlife books & magazines (used are fine).

Medical Supplies: Antibiotic bars of soap, latex exam gloves (sterile not required), sterile bandages, antibiotic ointment, gauze, first aid tape, Band-Aids, Ziploc bags and backpacks.

Sewing Supplies: Women's groups can use any fabric, needles, thread and sewing notions.

SHIPPING: Label medical donations as *Hygiene Supplies*, school and craft donations as *Education Supplies*. List on the USPS Customs Form as a *Gift* with a low value. Ship USPO surface/no insurance. *** **IMPORTANT** *** Use sturdy boxes, w/2 strips of duct tape in each direction and overlay edges w/2-inch plastic tape. Use USPO "M BAG" for books at a slightly reduced rate, 11 lbs minimum and 66 lbs max per box. Use USPS site: <http://ircalc.usps.gov/> to calculate postage by weight.

SHIP TO: Hammer Simwinga, PO Box 450140, Mpika, Zambia.

THANK YOU!!!

SURFACE SHIPPING ADVOCACY: The loss of reasonable surface postal shipping outside the US (to Zambia) has hit us hard. Please write and/or call your representatives and support cheaper USPS fees for individual and organizational humanitarian aid to remote places like N Luangwa. Go to <http://www.petitiononline.com/zikomo/petition.html> and sign a petition in support of a return of "M" Bag and surface shipping outside the USA. Tell others.

- **For Address Info:** Write - *The Office of the Clerk of the US House of Representatives/US Capitol* -- Room H154 - Washington, DC 20515 - PH: 202-225-7000, or email for info www.clerkweb.houses.gov - or email your representatives directly through the following link: www.house.gov/writerep
- **President George Bush,** The White House - Washington, DC 20500 Email: president@whitehouse.gov

Owens Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, Inc. -- P.O. Box 870530, Stone Mountain, GA 30087 -- www.owens-foundation.org
Mary Dykes at 770-270-0729 marydykes@mindspring.com or Tammy Johnson at 678-648-1267 padman2@comcast.net