



# NEWSLETTER Issue 2 (November 2008)

Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve News: **PROJECT AFRICAN WILDERNESS**  
[www.projectafricanwilderness.com](http://www.projectafricanwilderness.com)

## Message from Kenneth Smith Director PAW Malawi:

Realising my passion for Africa, her people, wilderness areas and extraordinary wildlife, I said goodbye to my comfortable life in South Africa, giving up my career in the Law and travelled all over the Southern and Central regions of this wonderful continent. I eventually settled in Malawi, often referred to as the warm heart of Africa and in 1992 I established Barefoot Safaris now based out of Lilongwe to fill a niche in the adventure travel market. Barefoot specifically caters for the needs of the more adventurous traveller within the sub-region of Central, Eastern and Southern Africa and although I am only a small safari operator, I am totally committed to eco tourism, providing support for the local communities within which I operate and most importantly the conservation of wild places and the Wildlife therein.

To fulfil my dreams I now dedicate much of my spare time and profits from my business to support Project African Wilderness in protecting the beauty that is Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve and am proud to be a founding Director of this important project.

I and my team at Barefoot Safaris provide a good deal of expertise and skills in support of the projects at Mwabvi, indeed our mechanic, plumber, carpenter, electrician as well as our work foremen regularly visit Chipembere and Migudu to complete much needed development and maintenance work. Barefoot Safaris has also donated Landrovers so that PAW may assist in the execution of anti poaching operations carried out by National Park staff and the local police and to provide transport for the PAW team of volunteers and workers from the local community in the execution of their daily tasks.

The support I and Barefoot Safaris is able to give is all made possible by our fantastic client base. They support PAW directly and indirectly through their love of Africa and their enthusiasm for Barefoot's adventure tours with full regard for our ethos regarding conservation, eco-tourism and responsible travel.

Most importantly however I would very much like to welcome a new addition to the PAW Team. Laura Marino a volunteer from Italy joined the team in early September. She is passionate about her new work and I wish her all the best in helping us save this piece of Africa!



*Kenneth Smith, Director, Project African Wilderness*  
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## Fencing Mwabvi

One of PAW's primary goals is to develop Mwabvi in order to stabilise the destruction that has reigned during the past 70 years.

One of the most important things we need to achieve is to fence the boundary of Mwabvi to enable us to begin with our program of wildlife re-introduction. It is crucial that we establish a fence in order to secure and safe guard the indigenous people surrounding the reserve their livestock and crops, since the conflict between wildlife and man is as old as our history on this planet. We urgently need to fund and transport the Bonnox fence from South Africa, all the other materials and labour; we can source locally ensuring that the local community also benefits from this investment.

To donate please follow the link to the PAW Trust UK Website:  
[www.projectafricanwilderness.org](http://www.projectafricanwilderness.org)

## Raising Funds

Our work in Malawi is supported by the PAW Trust, a charity in the UK that can fundraise internationally.

The Trust provides regular and ongoing financial support, which brings in a minimum of £2K per month for Mwabvi from personal and or corporate sponsorship. An extra £1K was provided in August and they have also committed to providing Chipembere with a

new satellite modem in January for a one off cost of \$3580 plus circa \$150 per month to provide us with email access.

The Trust is working hard to increase the regular supply of money; a difficult job in these lean days of the new global down turn. The commitment is clear to see and support from such eminent ambassadors such as former Scotland First Minister Jack McConnell MSP and Actor Steven Tompkinson will no doubt lead to greater awareness of the need to support the conservation of wild places in Africa with specific focus on PAW at Mwabvi.

Nevertheless we need to raise much more than has so far been achieved if we are to be successful in the long term. So how can you help? Well one way might be to join us on the **Mwabvi Ordeal 2009**; an ambitious sponsored bike ride through Malawi in March 2009! [www.projectafricanwilderness.org](http://www.projectafricanwilderness.org)



Dove Rock – Mwabvi WR

## Young Buffalo saved by PAW Scouts (Paul Dalgarno)



On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April Lester Maide, a Scout from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife, came to Chipembere Camp and informed myself that Mr Keston Maqaluwa had seen a stricken animal on the Matope road, possibly injured.

The light level was failing quickly, making it increasingly difficult to locate the animal we therefore quickly set out for the spot where it had last been seen.

Upon our arrival, the Duty Scout, Frank Marco requested to come with us and assist if necessary. I agreed to this, as he is a young Scout and the experience would be good for him and so we proceeded down towards the Matope road with haste, to the area where the distressed animal was last seen.

We left the vehicle and soon found its tracks including a long dragline in the earth, the light was fading fast, but I refused to give up, and began to follow the tracks into the Mopane thicket. Suddenly, we spotted a flick of an ear from an animal lying on the ground not 10 meters in front of us, on closer inspection it turned out to be a young male Buffalo, as we approached, the animal stood



up and we could see that a massive gin trap was attached to his front right foot; it was a pitiful sight to watch him try to run from us with a lump of metal weighing 12-13kgs attached to his front foot.

After a quick discussion and failing light conditions we decided to see how much damage the animal's leg had sustained; these horrible traps are made from car suspension springs and are wickedly powerful.

Lester knew that a DNPW patrol was near by and went off to request their assistance, whilst he was gone I approached the poor beast and tried to assess the damage to its trapped leg, to my relief I could see that only its hoof was trapped and no visible damage to its leg was in evidence, so a chance to save the animal was in the offering, rather than its humane destruction.

Myself, Mr. Maqualuwa and Frank kept the animal within the vicinity, although it was plucky enough to have a go at us even with the weight dragging it down, but spirit it did not lack being a Buffalo,

Lester returned with 3 DNPW scouts and we made a quick decision to subdue the animal and remove the trap if possible,

As the young Buffalo made a run for it, we up ended the animal and brought it to the ground, no mean feat with a young Buffalo, it then took 2 of us to physically stand on the trap spring to disengage it just enough, after several tries, to release the Buffalo's trapped hoof we were finally able to inspect the leg for damage, finding that the hoof was only a little damaged.

Now the tricky bit followed, its dark, we have a few hundred pounds of angry, frightened Buffalo at our feet and the only way out was to all release at once and scatter, so that's what we did!

Needless to say the Buffalo got up promptly, snorted and charged the nearest Scout,

Philip, I think in the confusion, and then roared into the Bush without hitting its intended target!

Without PAW's continued support and funding we would not have been in a position to save this noble young animal from the jaws of the gin trap and it would almost certainly have died a long lingering death. We were also able to reward Mr Maqualuwa for his information and assistance ensuring that the local community once again appreciates the benefits of conserving this precious corner of Africa for generations to come.

To see conservation in action, follow the link to our website and arrange a trip to Mwabvi. [www.projectafricanwilderness.com](http://www.projectafricanwilderness.com)



### **My first month in Mwabvi (Laura Marino)**

Dawn and sunset; the red and deep sun here at Mwabvi introduces a new day and ends the past one, drafting a half circle which becomes your cot.

This has been my welcome, in a surrounding of peace and quite of the Reserve on one hand, and of energy and active passion of Paul, the project manager, on the other hand. I've quickly and easily begun to feel part of the team: the workers at Chipembere Camp are always ready to smile and we all try our best to communicate between Chichewa and English.

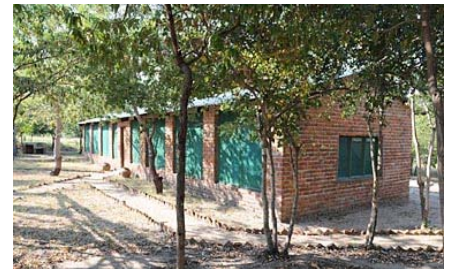
Little by little, Pango'ono Pango'ono', I'm getting to know the Reserve; with its incredible variety of vegetation and colours, it

seems to put together different places in one, showing you how resistant is nature, how wise is nature, and at the same time how much it needs us to survive.

I'm beginning to understand how difficult the compromise is between the Conservation of nature and the Conservation of themselves that people from here face everyday. Maybe both the sides of the matter are right and we must look at the Reserve also with African eyes; it's from here that I want to start: Conservation of Mwabvi Reserve as a benefit for everyone.

The first project has been the orphanage of Chimpanga, a village close to the Reserve and Chipembere. We repaired the building and I've arranged with the teacher to begin a geographic and environment programme to teach the children about the natural resources they are surrounded by and how they can benefit from them if they respect and protect them.

I know this is possible, I know it from their eyes, from the light of their innocence and open attitude towards people, each time I go away from there I'm looking forward to seeing those eyes again.



Chipembere Camp – Mwabvi WR

To help us save this small piece of African wilderness and to give something back to the local communities please visit [www.projectafricanwilderness.com](http://www.projectafricanwilderness.com) and donate on line.

