



# **The Anne K. Taylor Fund**

Quarterly Report (October – December 2015)

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*To find both short and long-term solutions that involve the Maasai communities in conservation efforts to protect their heritage and their futures.*

## **A NOTE FROM ANNE**

Dear friends and supporters,

Another busy year has drawn to a close. I hope that each and every one of you enjoyed the Holiday Season with family and friends. It is now “back to work” as schools re-open and 2016 gets started. We intend for it to be a productive year for our AKTF team, who dedicate their lives to protecting the wildlife and assisting the local communities in many diverse ways, which you will read in this report.

I am back in my homeland of Kenya welcoming safari guests and getting geared up for a busy 2016, continuing our efforts to protect the wildlife, constructing schools and providing educational assistance in the environs of the Maasai Mara.

I want to take this opportunity to once again thank all of you, who continue to support our important work, from the bottom of my heart.

Our AKTF team joins me in wishing you all the very best in 2016. We intend to continue working hard to keep the wildlife safer. We will try to update you as frequently as possible with our progress, which is only possible with your generous support. Thank you. I hope you will enjoy “reading all about it”!

With warm regards and huge gratitude,

Anne

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## ANTI-POACHING PROJECT

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The Anne K. Taylor Fund's Anti-Poaching Project has been protecting big cats, addressing illegal hunting of elephant and rhinos for their tusks and horns respectively, and the snaring of animals for bushmeat since 1999 by facilitating anti-poaching and de-snaring patrols, in conjunction with local conservancies and wildlife management authorities. In that time, the AKTF Team spends about 200 days in the field each year, and to date they have removed more than **5,000** snares – saving untold thousands of animals. They have also rescued many animals found caught in these brutal snares, and, with the authorities, they have arrested dozens of poachers.

### The AKTF Team

Elias Kamande, Team Leader  
Saruni “Sirere” Kitono  
Nenguju “Kelonga” Oleluka  
Lelimpa “Saitoti” Ng’oswa

On patrols, the team works with the local authorities: Mara Conservancy, Kenya Wildlife Service, and Kenya Forestry Service, as well as local General Service Units.

### Anti-Poaching Activities

The Fourth Quarter of 2015 saw the end of the Great Migration, and tragedy for the Marsh Pride of lions. In collaboration with the Mara Conservancy and Tanzanian Rangers (TANAPA), AKTF continued to patrol the Tanzanian border to disrupt poaching activities.

Month	Wildlife Found in Snares	Wildlife Rescued	Snares Collected	Wildlife Confirmed Poached	Hunting Tools Recovered	Poachers Arrested
October	4	1	50	10	3	3
November	0	0	2	0	1	7
December	0	1	6	2	0	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>

## HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION

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In addition to patrolling for poaching activity, the AKTF Team also serves the human and wildlife populations in Maasai Mara through helping to avert or mitigate human-wildlife conflict. The main forms of conflict that AKTF deals with involve livestock predation by wild predators and crop raiding by large herbivores, and the retaliatory hunts by humans. These incidences are exacerbated by the rainy season, which causes many herbivore species to leave the Reserve, and for lions and other predators to follow them into densely populated human communities where livestock make easy prey. Or, it is very common for herders to sneak their herds into the Reserve's tall grasses where lions have an easy advantage.

In both situations, wildlife believed to be at fault are often killed, and the people lose another piece of the fragile ecological system in Maasai Mara. By maintaining a trusted presence in the community, and by keeping herds out of the Reserve, AKTF is able to know about and respond to situations before they result in wildlife deaths.

### Lion Hunts Averted

The Fourth Quarter was punctuated by the devastating poisoning of the Marsh Pride of lions after they attacked cows illegally grazing in Maasai Mara National Reserve. Three lions succumbed. Those immediately responsible were arrested and are still awaiting prosecution, though have been released from custody on bail. Unfortunately, the Team and Mara Conservancy Rangers were not able to respond in time to avert this tragedy, mainly because the Reserve is outside of our jurisdiction.

Month	Cows Killed	Sheep & Goats Killed	Successful Retaliation Hunts
October	(Unknown)	(Unknown)	0
November	1	7	0
December	6	18 + (Unknown)	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7+</b>	<b>25+</b>	<b>1</b>

### Elephant Hunting Near Maasai Mara National Reserve

Elephants continue to eat from crop fields perhaps because so much of their natural **nutrition sources in the forests have been cut down or fenced**. The resulting conflict leads some farmers to spear elephants to keep them away. AKTF, Mara Conservancy, and Mara Elephant Project are striving to educate farmers about peaceful ways to deter elephants, such as using chili powder or installing beehives

around their perimeters; however, as people convert more and more land bordering the Reserve to crop fields, conflict will increase proportionally.

Month	Dead Elephants	Tusks Recovered
October	0	0
November	0	0
December	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

## HABITAT PROTECTION

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### Illegal Logging and Charcoal Making

The Nyekweri Forest on top of the Oloololo Escarpment is important for the Mara’s hydrology, for elephant nutrition and life cycles, and for safe dispersal grounds for animals leaving the Reserve. The community-held forest is being cut down at an alarming rate, and there appears to be **much confusion on the ground concerning the laws governing timber harvesting and charcoal burning**. Most people harvesting from the forest do not possess the proper authorization, including signatures from at least three different, specific government officials, to cut hardwood trees. Even if they have been given permission by one of the required authorities, such as a chief, this does not legally permit them to harvest timber or burn charcoal. It seems that several community leaders are giving unauthorized permission – and tacit social protection – to loggers who are eager to capitalize on the state of confusion with property rights in the forest.

To combat this destruction, the AKTF Team assists the Mara Conservancy and Kenya Forestry Service to confiscate timber and charcoal, and to destroy charcoal kilns when they are discovered. Confiscating timber and charcoal has proved difficult for political reasons, since almost every time the Team takes a load, it is ordered released by some highly placed government official the next day.

Month	Charcoal Kilns Destroyed
October	26
November	44
December	54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b>

The Team also began work establishing a tree-planting project with Parta Kirat, providing fence materials to reduce wildlife and livestock pressure on the seedlings.

## Illegal Grazing

The AKTF Team continued to assist the Mara Conservancy in arresting herders who illegally brought cows into the Mara Triangle. These cows are competing for grass with wildlife, and are destroying the only intact habitat in the Mara. When herders are caught with cows, the cows are confiscated and the herders are charged a ransom to retrieve them. These encounters are used by the team to educate herders about the dangers of grazing livestock next to wild animals, specifically in terms of disease transmission, and also the threat their herds pose to the Reserve's fragile ecosystem.

It was illegal grazing, at night when lions hunt, that instigated the Marsh Pride poisoning in December, after herders lost cows to lions after trespassing in the Reserve.

## FORTIFIED BOMA PROJECT

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AKTF also prevents human-wildlife conflict by partnering – through financial support from National Geographic, Oracle, Eden Wildlife Trust, and other donors – with local landowners to fortify livestock enclosures (bomas) with chain-link fencing. These fortified bomas provide secure protection for livestock and reduce the need for herders to kill predators. Sharing half the cost with the Maasai beneficiaries, AKTF has provided materials and expert labor to build more than **750 fortified bomas** since 2008, protecting an average of **180 animals per enclosure**.

Overseen by Boma Team Leader, Felix Munyao, these bomas have been **95% effective** at keeping predators from livestock: before AKTF fences were installed, each enclosure experienced an average of nine livestock losses per year, but with fortification experienced **less than one loss per year**.

Currently, AKTF is collaborating with researchers from **Duke University** to publish our findings on how effective bomas are at deterring attacks from predators and thereby reducing human-wildlife conflict and the impetus for herders to kill predators. We expect a paper to move through the peer review process and be available in the next four months.

We work specifically with herders who have experienced predation at their bomas, and, when possible, we also proactively build stronger bomas for young herders who want to start or grow their herds on the “right foot”.

Service Provided	Number of Bomas	Number of Livestock Protected
Boma installations	18	3,528

## EDUCATION PROJECT

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We facilitate general education through several school-building projects, field trips into the Reserve, and school lunch program (thanks to Insta Products). The latter is especially important for promoting learning, since most students walk miles to school each day with nothing more than a cup of tea for breakfast. We also provide water tanks, toilet facilities, sports equipment and textbooks, to improve the educational experience of Maasai Mara's youth.

This quarter, we finished construction on **three more classrooms** at the Nailepu Nursery School, thanks to donations from Larry and Susan Patrick. This was the first year of operation for the school, which started in January with three classrooms and three grades. Now the graduating students have space to keep learning in the New Year, and the school can welcome in more students than they were able to in 2015.

AKTF helped Mara-Meru Cheetah Project distribute educational books on wildlife to schoolchildren at Oloolmongi. These materials will challenge and inspire local students to view their animal neighbors from a different perspective. We are very grateful for the collaboration, support, and enthusiasm of Mara-Meru Cheetah Project.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The work we do would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors and partners. National Geographic, Oracle, and Eden Wildlife Trust, along with many private sources, continue to fund our Fortified Boma Project, and we also owe thanks to those many other individuals, families, and institutions who continuously support the Anti-Poaching and Education projects. These incredible and thoughtful supporters continue to make donations throughout the year, and we will list them all and thank them together in our year-end report.

Special thanks also goes to Brian Heath and the Rangers of the Mara Conservancy; Governors and Little Governors Camps for help with our patrol vehicles; Sanctuary Olonana; Kichwa Tembo; Bernie Githigi and Brian Gow at Abercrombie and Kent for administrative support and more vehicle maintenance assistance, respectively; Stuart Allison and Game Ranching for manufacturing boma materials; and of course the Maasai communities for partnering with us.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the AKTF Team members on the ground, who often work around the clock for weeks at a time to help AKTF carry out its mission to protect the natural and cultural heritage in Maasai Mara.