



ANNUAL REPORT

Animal Life Line for Anti Poaching 2008

Looking at 2008 we can conclude that it was a very successful year for the Anti Poaching team from Animal Life Line for Anti Poaching (ALL4AP)

ALL4AP is an anti poaching initiative active on the peripheries of Hwange National Park and occasionally assists National Parks with their Anti Poaching efforts.

Achievements

As predicted we managed to cover a lot of ground and our findings were sometimes disturbing. Disturbing in a way that we collected for instance with our team more than twice the amount of snares than the 2 teams from our sister organization Painted Dog Conservation (PDC) in the previous year together. Under very difficult circumstances we managed to achieve remarkable results.

Snare removal

We managed to remove 1097 snares by ourselves and recovered another 88 snares from homes and homesteads during combined operations with National Park Wildlife Management Authority, Forestry Commission and the Police. Together with our sister organization PDC we managed to recover 67 wire snares which gives a total of **1252**.

Arrests

Together with PDC we managed to arrest a record of 54 poachers. Most of them are meat poachers or a combination of setting snares and cutting trees.

Many logs were handed to Forestry Commission. Ten of these arrests were made by joint Patrols with the Police, Forestry Commission and National Parks Wildlife Management Authority. This compared to only 10 arrests the previous year (PDC).



New Anti Poaching Unit.

In the end of the year we assisted in recruiting and training a new, third anti poaching unit for our sister organization PDC, to strengthen our position in the area.

Tel One Operation

To discourage people from using old telephone wire for poaching, ALL4AP took the lead in a joint operation with other stakeholders, to remove old telephone lines. A total of **2, 2 tons** of old telephone wire was taken away from the area in October. A very 'hot' job! We know that we will still find the copper/steel telephone wires in the future, but it will be much harder for poachers to find this type of wire, which was available at random.

Animal release

The team managed to release (without immobilizing it) a fully grown male Water buck. The animal was caught by a snare on the front leg but had no injuries and could be released on sight, which it seemed to appreciate after waking up out of its shocked state.. (See website www.all4ap.org)

Casualties:

The number of animals found dead in the snares were 82 this year. This makes a minimum success rate of 6,5%. The actual success rate of course is much higher.

Failures:

Due to the difficult situations in the country the teams were not always able to do the patrols in the areas where we would like to be present. Especially around the election days there was quite some tension and it seemed unsafe to ignore the advice not to go out.

National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority

The collaboration with National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority was not what it should have been. Unfortunately only a few patrols were carried out in the Park. We hope in the next year N.P.W.M.A. will allow us to do more combined patrols.

Police - Prosecution

The Police still fails to hand us proper information about convictions. Too many poachers managed to escape from the Gwayi Police Post. This problem has been addressed and promised to be taken care of by Dete Police station.

Unfortunately the level of punishment for both meat and wood poachers is almost negligible compared to the damage done in terms of real value (retail) from the animals killed or trees cut.



Gwayi

After about 8 years we can state that most of the farmers in the Gwayi region, forming the ICA (Intensive Conservation Area) are not serious in protecting their farm or ploughing back into them. This is stated in the investigation by National Parks Wildlife Management Authority in December 2008.

Too many of the farmers see us as the ones that 'should' protect their farms instead of supplementing their own efforts. A lot of the farmers are seldom seen on their estate. Positive note is that most farmers allow us to go on their properties and that a few of the farmers or communities really try their best.

Conclusion

Poaching in this year picked up drastically. The total number of snares recovered (1252 ALL4AP + 1421 PDC = **2673**) is increasing to the level in the early years of 2002 where 3420 snares were removed by only one team (PDC). This compared to 502 snares in 2007 (PDC).

Our expectation is that if the situation will not improve, the poaching will be even more intensive in the coming year.

Hunting with domestic dogs seems to be a trend. These poachers are hard to trace, since they do not have to return to one place, like wire snare poachers have to.

Despite the problems, ALL4AP will do its best to minimize the effects of the poachers efforts and try to protect Zimbabwe's heritage for future generations and is looking forward to collaborate with all stakeholders that have the same intention.