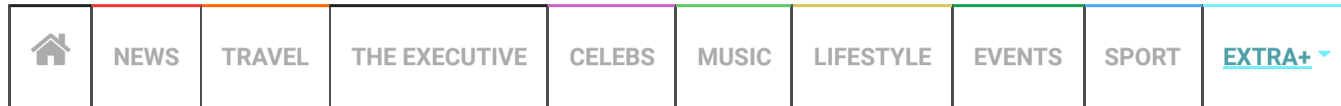


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Wilderness Safaris supports Scorpion Anti-Poaching Unit in Hwangwe

📅 Oct 2, 2020

October 2020 – Despite COVID-19 bringing global travel to a standstill, Wilderness Safaris has reaffirmed its dedication to conserving and restoring Africa's wilderness by continuing to support vital conservation projects in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe. This included a recent donation from Wilderness Safaris' Sustainability Fund to support the operating costs of the Scorpion Anti-Poaching Unit (SAPU) until end December 2020. This will ensure that the team, which includes Hwange National Park rangers, is able to maintain its crucial year-round presence within the park, which is vital in the fight against poaching.

The SAPU provides essential wildlife protection in the south-eastern section of Hwange. Daily patrols are conducted along the boundaries where subsistence poaching, as well as poaching for game meat, can be quite common. Now, at a time, when many people have lost their incomes as a result of COVID-19, the poaching risk has increased too.



Wilderness Safari, Linkwasha, Hwange, Zimbabwe, CrookesAndJackson

“As the largest national park in Zimbabwe, Hwange is a significant tourism asset to the country and we will do what we can to help preserve it, ensuring that we always have eyes on the ground to curb poaching in the area”, notes Arnold Tshipa, Wilderness Safaris Zambezi Environmental Officer.

Wilderness Safaris has been directly supporting SAPU since 2012, taking over all its operations in 2015. To date in 2020, the team has already covered 1 819 km on foot, while 96 vehicle patrols covered more than 2 662 km. A total of 151 snares were removed, and one arrest of a leopard poacher was made mid-year. Since its inception, SAPU has removed 2 546 snares during 1 690 patrols. The information is logged with the assistance of Wilderness Safaris partners, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) and Panthera, who use the data to detect poaching patterns and trends.



“Given Hwange’s vast size, it is a constant challenge to cover this large area during patrols; however, the unit’s 44% increase in foot patrols and 63% in vehicle patrols last year has had a notable impact on the population and diversity of species. However, there is much more work to be done to ensure that this park is still able to positively contribute to the country’s economy in the future”, Arnold adds.

Dr Neil Midlane, Wilderness Safaris Sustainability Manager says, “In the current climate, the role of these units is more vital than ever and the conservation value of people travelling to our camps has never been clearer. Our Conservation Heroes: COVID Relief campaign, which was launched at the start of the global lockdowns, has provided crucial food relief to some of our most vulnerable community partners to date, which has, in turn, helped reduce some of the poaching pressure on the park”.



Wilderness Safari, Linkwasha, Hwange, Zimbabwe, CrookesAndJackson

“As we all face the uncertainty surrounding travel during this time, Wilderness Safaris realises the importance of continuing to support conservation, whilst still operating in partnership with and under the auspices of ZimParks”, says Arnold, “We will continue to work closely with SAPU, providing guidance, expertise and resources for the protection of the precious fauna and flora of Hwange, and we trust our guests will join us in our efforts to help sustain this important conservation work”.

To watch a short video showcasing a day in a life of a SAPU ranger, [click here](#).

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