

Painted Dog Project Update

February 2010

Conservation through Action and Education

Painted dogs *Lycaon pictus* are among the rarest species on the African continent. At the beginning of the 20th Century, 500,000 roamed throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Today, fewer than 3,000 remain. Only Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa have viable populations. Painted dogs have a highly evolved social system which means persecution of an individual has larger repercussions than to just the individual animal. Ninety five per cent of dog mortalities are from snares, shooting and being run over by people who believe the wild dogs are directly affecting their livelihoods.

Painted Dog Conservation (PDC) have developed pragmatic and holistic strategies to ensure a substantial and lasting contribution to painted dog conservation and the lives of the local people who come in to contact with the dogs regularly.



African painted dog Lycaon pictus



Brig. T. Ogilvie Graham treating a painted dog in the field

Clinic for painted dogs

Through WVI and PDC patron Steve Leonard, PDC approached WVI for advice and help with supplying veterinary equipment for a new clinic at the PDC centre.

The worsening economic situation in Zimbabwe has resulted in an increasing use of wire snares to provide bushmeat for local people. Snared, sick and otherwise injured dogs are currently darted and face long and stressful journeys to veterinary facilities in Bulawayo with a predictable increase in mortality. As PDC's rehabilitation centre increases its national and international reputation, they are frequently brought painted dogs for treatment and rehabilitation. The dogs are subsequently returned to the wild to rejoin their own packs, or remain in the centre until a new pack is established.

A grant from the RCVS Trust enabled WVI vet Brigadier Tom Ogilvie-Graham to visit the project, supply some basic veterinary equipment, advise on equipping the clinic further and provide training for project staff in first aid for the dogs in the field, greatly enhancing the probability of their survival.

First aid for dogs in the field

Brig. T. Ogilvie Graham was able to advise on the treatment of a dog that had recently had a forelimb amputated and was recovering in the rehabilitation unit (right). He also took part in darting an injured dog that had been tracked using its radio collar. This dog was the pack's alpha male and it was crucial to do all that could be done to save him and allow him to take his place back in the pack. Once darted and anaesthetised, it was clear that the dog had a very bad infection in the triceps above his elbow. Tom had to pull out 20 maggots before treating it as best as possible. The anaesthetic was reversed and the dog allowed to join the waiting pack.

Four weeks later the dog was reported to be doing well and improving all the time.



Painted Dog Project Update February 2010

Not just for painted dogs

The veterinary clinic has been built not only for the treatment of snared and injured painted dogs and other wildlife, but for the treatment of domestic animals for the local villages. As part of Painted Dog Conservation's 'Bridging the Gap' initiative the clinic provides a link between conservation and local communities. PDC hopes to generate consideration, understanding and empathy for painted dogs by illustrating that conservation can deliver benefits to animals *and* people in many different ways.



Treating a deep baboon bite

Responding to an emergency

In January 2010, there was an outbreak of distemper among domestic dogs in the villages surrounding Hwange National Park. Distemper negatively affects wildlife, including painted dogs. WVI were asked whether our vet would be able to assist in vaccination clinics.

WVI was able to respond quickly, thanks to Intervet Schering-Plough Animal Health providing vaccine and worming tablets, Novartis Animal Health UK providing ectoparasite treatment and Millpledge providing other clinical equipment, all at short notice.



Setting up a mobile clinic



PDC arranged five clinics in local communities, ensured the safe passage of vaccines and treatments through customs, enlisted the help of government vet Dr Zishiri and his staff and ensured that Brig. Ogilvie-Graham had all the equipment he needed.

The result was an astounding success with 450 dogs vaccinated for distemper and rabies and treated for worms and ectoparasites. In addition, Brig. Ogilvie Graham was able to treat a number of other ailments including broken legs, skin conditions and a dog which had been bitten down to the liver by a baboon.

The Future

Due to the success of this visit, WVI has pledged to continue to provide expert veterinary support to PDC and to facilitate the acquisition of equipment and medicines both for the veterinary clinic and for proposed vaccination clinics.

Thanks to a new partnership between WVI and Intervet, it

is proposed that vaccinations clinics service 100 dogs every two months and will protect Hwange National Park against distemper, while providing a valuable veterinary service to the local people and their dogs.

WVI would like to thank all our sponsors for helping us to achieve so much.



**WILDLIFE VETS
INTERNATIONAL**