

The Anne K. Taylor Fund

2020 Annual Report

A Note From Anne

Dear AKTF friends and supporters,

I am writing to you from Kenya - the first time for a year that I have managed to return. And what a year it has been! I hope you and yours have stayed safe and healthy through it.

While I will admit to having been somewhat anxious about travelling again (unusual for me!), after a year of virtual isolation in Montana and with all the COVID-19 protocols in place, I am extremely happy to be back in Kenya! It has been wonderful to reunite with my AKTF team and friends - not to mention Sheba, my beautiful shared Vizsla who I have missed terribly. I am so proud of the AKTF team for keeping our valuable work going, and of James and Boaz for keeping my house and garden sparkling and welcoming. With your support, despite the hard circumstances, the AKTF team has managed to keep everything afloat and has adapted to these challenging times.

The AKTF patrol team, with Elias as their leader, has their work cut out for them, helping the local authorities to protect the lions. Shortly, there will be a huge ceremony, Eunoto, where Masai warriors graduate to become junior elders - a very emotional time for them. As the old traditions dictate, the warriors must kill a lion or two with spears to prove their bravery. This, of course, is not viable, legal or acceptable in this day and age when lions' very survival is threatened. There has already been one attempt by a large group of warriors but, thankfully, they were intercepted before completing their mission and the lions lived to see another day.

As we are under partial lockdown in Kenya due to COVID-19, we were given permission as "essential workers" by the Kenya Wildlife Service to travel to the Mara. This was a huge honour and a relief; otherwise, we could not travel out of Nairobi and the wildlife would be at risk. I am also thrilled to report that we were able to get all our Nairobi staff and Mara contingent vaccinated.

The boma protection team, under Felix' leadership, has been fully engaged in re-building the bomas (livestock enclosures) that elephants seem to be taking pleasure in destroying - one after another! - and which heavy rains and the long lockdown kept us from reaching sooner. There are always these challenges to deal with - and the team is doing an excellent job on overcoming them. It has, however, meant we have not built as many bomas as we had planned this past year. Hopefully we will catch up in 2021! We thank National Geographic, Eden Wildlife Trust, and our other generous boma supporters for their understanding and flexibility.

A Note From Anne

(continued)

The women's groups, under Carol's steady eye and hand, have adapted to the times. To help the community fight the COVID-19 virus, they immediately got to work making masks for all 1,000 children and their teachers in the three schools we support. This group did an incredible job, in record time, and made the masks to match each school's uniforms. They continue to produce washable sanitary pads for all the schoolgirls attending our schools. Once schools are in session again, Carol will be resuming health and hygiene workshops for both girls and boys to prevent early pregnancies. Unfortunately, with all the schoolchildren home for most of the year, the number of early pregnancies increased exponentially. We must now work hard to ensure these girls are able to continue their educations to give them some hope for a happy and successful future.

I would like to thank each one of you who have been so generous and supportive during this past year. Without your unfailing loyalty and help we would not have been able to keep going as we did. I am forever grateful for the kindness you have shown to the people and animals of the Masai Mara. I am also grateful to my team for continuing to work as hard as they did, even when they were not receiving their full salaries for part of last year.

I hope that 2021 will bring some relief to all those who have suffered during this pandemic. And, wearing my A.K. Taylor International "tour organizer hat", I look forward to welcoming you back to the world, wherever you may choose to travel. It feels good to be looking towards the future!

With gratitude and love,

Anne

AKTF Leadership

- *(clockwise from top left)*
- Anne Kent Taylor, Director & National Geographic Explorer
- Felix Masaku, Boma Team Leader
- Caroline Kiugo, Community Programs Leader
- Elias Kamande, Patrol Team Leader



Anti-Poaching

We facilitate patrols with local authorities, such as the Mara Conservancy, to disrupt poaching activity, rescue animals wounded by poachers, and arrest poachers. We also search for and retrieve the deadly wire snares that poachers use to trap and kill animals.

2020 Achievements:

- 148 snares retrieved (7,288 total since 2009)
- 21 poaching tools retrieved
- 5 poachers arrested (by the Mara Conservancy)
- 8 animals rescued from poachers, including elephants, zebra, wildebeest, buffalo & eland







Habitat Protection

In order to conserve the dwindling forests surrounding Maasai Mara, our team patrols with the Kenya Forestry Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, and Mara Conservancy, to locate and destroy illegal charcoal and logging operations.

2020 Achievements:

- 44 illegal charcoal kilns found & destroyed

Boma Fortification

Bomas protect Maasai livestock from predators. This in turn protects predators from retaliation by herders that have lost livestock.

Our bomas are built (or refurbished) using metal corners and chain-link fencing. These materials will survive the harsh climate of the Mara and last for many years. These bomas are made possible through partnerships with National Geographic's Big Cat Initiative, Angama Foundation, Eden Wildlife Trust, Adventure Travel Conservation Fund, and Maasai landowners, as well as other donors.

2020 Achievements

- 6 bomas constructed (making 851 bomas fortified since 2008)
- 1,320 new head of livestock protected





Boma Fortification

(continued)

In 2020, elephants and hippos smashed several AKTF bomas, which had to be repaired. These animals are maddened by all the electric fencing that landowners have used to demarcate their properties, and they take it out on bomas.

More 2020 Achievements

- 51 bomas refurbished or repaired
- 11,220 head of livestock protected through these repairs



Supporting Schools

2020 Achievements

- 1000 COVID-19 masks provided to students and teachers at Oloolmongi, Nailepu, and Oliashire schools
- School lunch program at Oloolmongi Primary School continues to provide daily nourishment for 500 students

Supporting Schools (continued)

- Textbooks were distributed to all the local schools with which we work
- 5 water tanks were installed at Oloolmongi Primary school in order to secure safe drinking and washing water for students and teachers





Economic Development: Soap Making & Esidai

AKTF continued to sponsor a soap-making endeavor by the Esidai Women's Group. Using locally available materials, they make laundry, body, and dish soap, and sell it to local lodges. This project gives the women a degree of financial independence from their husbands and families.



Community Health & Esidai

Because menstruation is a taboo subject in Maasai Mara, young women are not taught how to safely manage their periods each month. As a result, female students end up missing a lot of school out of shame or fear of bleeding in class, and they fall behind their male peers.

To address this, the Esidai Women's Group, sponsored by AKTF, have been sewing washable, sanitary pads for girls and women to use to discreetly manage their bleeding. These allow girls to attend school all month long and keep up with the rest of their class, and for women to manage their periods in a healthier way.

Additionally, the Esidai group also responded to COVID-19 by using their skills and tools to make masks for students and teachers in Maasai Mara. With a local shortage of masks, Esidai stepped in to help keep their community safer!

2020 Achievements:

- 120 menstrual health and hygiene kits were distributed to young women
- 1000 COVID-19 masks sewn for students and teachers



Collaboration with Others

AKTF works closely with the Mara Conservancy, Angama Mara, Eden Wildlife Trust, Mara North Conservancy, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forestry Service, Mara Elephant Project, David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, and many more. We are extremely grateful for the support and partnership we enjoy with these organizations.

We are celebrating eleven full years of boma building, and we must make special note that National Geographic has funded this project since the very beginning. We are so grateful and proud to be receiving their support, guidance, and partnership.



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