

Elephant Outreach Programme
Xaxaba Village Visits
November 24th and 25th 2007



“Living with Elephants”, with the support of Sanctuary Lodges, has successfully launched its 6th season of the Elephant Outreach Programme and Xaxaba Village, with 9 children and two adult volunteers came out to Elephant Camp on our first weekend.



Members of Xaxaba Village with Jabu and the LWE team



Charity, a 10 year old from Xaxaba, examines Morula's trunk

The highlight of this trip was without a doubt, the elephant encounter and meeting the eles. Baratanye Hatshe from Xaxaba said, “I saw the elephants and I am very very happy. I am thankful for the education Mr. Doug gave me. One new thing I learnt was about the elephants' lives and how they feed.”

The trip culminated in the presentation of certificates and “Living With Elephants” wristbands to commemorate the experience. The children affirmed their understanding of how important elephants are to the ecosystem of the Okavango Delta.



Xaxaba sports their new wristbands

Elephant Outreach Programme
Daunara Village Visits
November 29th and 30th 2007



Daunara Village was the second group to visit Elephant Camp this season. The group is pictured here with Jabu and Doug and French journalist and film-maker, Marc Cleriot.

The majority of the children from Daunara Village had never encountered an elephant in the wild and expressed some initial fear. Jabu thrilled the children by making various sounds that elephants use to communicate. Several children, including Ntwankgolo Batho later commented, “Ke rata Jabu ka gore e dira medume e e menatsle khata”. This in rough translation means, “I like it when Jabu makes nice sounds like the rumble.”

Godtraone, a 15 year old from the village, was quite taken with Morula’s sleeping demonstration and wrote, “I have learnt that an elephant can sleep just like a person.”



Hesron’s illustration of Jabu eating palm nuts

Each group visit, in addition to learning about elephants, also involves breaking the myths many villagers believe. The children are encouraged to depict their experience in pictures. One thrilling moment, during Daunara’s visit, involved Jabu shaking a palm tree to eat the relished palm nuts. He generously shared these with Morula and Thembi too.

Elephant Outreach Programme Xharaxao Village Visits December 5th-6th 2007



In early December, Living With Elephants, ventured out to the village of Xharaxao to pick up 6 girls and 5 boys for their first ever visit to Elephant Camp. The young safari crowd, ages 9-13, were accompanied by Obeilwe Sheto, aged 24, also seeing elephants for the first time.



Xharaxao meets Jabu and the LWE team



Most of the group was a bit hesitant when first introduced to Jabu, Thembi and Morula. They won the childrens' hearts easily, as they always do, and made them laugh with outstanding rumbles and trumpets. Soon the group was engrossed in studying tails, trunks and ele feet and touching elephants for the first time.

One of the key components of the Living With Elephants programme is to introduce the children to potential careers in ecotourism. The groups visit Stanley's Camp, one of Sanctuary Lodges, key tourist camps. Here the children learn about the various career opportunities in the camp and have the chance to visit relatives from their village.



Xharaxao Village group meet Evelyn, one of the managers at Stanley's Camp

Elephant Outreach Programme
Bana Ba Letsatsi
December 10th and 11th 2007



Each year since initiating the programme, Living With Elephants has sponsored a trip for Bana Ba Letsatsi, an NGO in Maun dedicated to helping children at risk. This year Bana Ba Letsatsi sent a group of 6 girls and 4 boys to experience Elephant Camp. The children selected had shown exceptional dedication to their studies this term, despite challenging circumstances. Living With Elephants was happy to support them and reward their efforts.



Doug explains the role of the elephant's tusk to Terence Gaobonwe, age 7



Matebele Sebapalo, age 15, was quite surprised to discover that elephants sleep and even dream. Elephants, as the children learn in camp, often sleep up to 6 hours per night and do in fact, lay down. This is demonstrated here by Morula.

Whilst in camp, in addition to seeing animals in the wild, the children are introduced to various environmental games. Games such as "Oh Tlou" illustrate the basic needs of the elephant and how population levels can fluctuate depending on the ability to find adequate habitat, food and water. The children also play games, which reinforce the interdependent relationship between all species in the Okavango Delta. It is our hope that they will teach their peers these games and even more children will benefit.

Elephant Outreach Programme Morutsa Village Visits December 13th and 14th 2007



The guests from the village of Morutsa were greeted with a plethora of baby animals on the drive in. The rains have come to the Okavango and life is everywhere. Highlights include a delightful group of baby warthogs frolicking on the runway on the way into camp. Baby giraffe, impala and zebra were everywhere and there was a great deal of pointing and laughing from the truck.



The light was stunning as the children first met the elephants in the late afternoon. In addition to information about the elephants, many of the children were fascinated with the role elephant dung plays in the ecosystem and asked Doug some interesting follow-up questions.



Leano, one of LWE's elephant handlers, shows children from Morutsa the wonders of an elephant's tail



Boineelo Arabang, age 8, gets a closer look at one of Morula's feet with some guidance from Leano

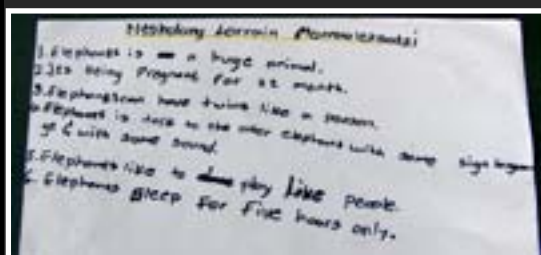
Elephant Outreach Programme
Boro Village Visits
December 15th and 16th 2007



Boro Village is, for the most part, a farming community and many of its people encounter elephants from the Delta in a negative way – through crop raiding. One goal of “Living With Elephants” is to educate the children so they realise the importance of elephants to both to the environment and to ecotourism.



Doug and Jabu pose with Boro



Mtsholang outlines some facts she learnt about the elephant

The children of Boro battled the rain and were all thrilled with their newfound knowledge about elephants. Instead of drawing one of the elephants, one of the children, Mtsholang Monnaaletsatsi chose to list 6 new facts she had learnt.

LWE is proud to have Ikawatthaeng join our team. Ika is 22 years old and, in addition to hailing from Boro, also comes from a farming family. She loves the bush and especially elephants! Ika is especially gifted with children and ensures that all is understood. One of her many jobs on the team is helping with translation.



Ikawatthaeng and Jabu – a great team

Elephant Outreach Programme Ditshipi Village Visits December 18th and 19th 2007



Our final visit of the 2007-year saw the village of Ditshipi bring out a group of children aged 11-16. This older group had a successful drive into camp and was lucky to see two male lions and an elephant cow and her calf.

Florence, a young girl from Ditshipi, drew Jabu browsing on a palm tree and showed her newfound knowledge of the different types of dung by illustrating and labeling the "stool" of the buffalo, elephant, hyena and giraffe.



Thembi struts her stuff

At the end of each elephant activity, the village groups often dance to show their appreciation. Never one to stay out of the act, Thembi has a few great dancing steps of her own. This is a genuine delight to all of the children and adults. Thembi is always happy to oblige and is most gracious about her talent.

Elephant Outreach Programme Maun District School Visit #1 February 2008



A young student from Gxhabara is entranced as she meets Morula

Beginning in February 2008, all public and private schools from the Maun District were invited to participate in Elephant Camp. Over 150 students and teachers ranging in age from 7 to 16 years old spent some quality time in the bush getting to know the elephants and learning about the Okavango ecosystem.

The first children and teachers came from Bonatla and Gxhabara Primary Schools. Both schools have active environmental clubs and the students were quite enthused about meeting the elephants first hand and reinforcing their commitment to the flora and fauna of Botswana. They impressed Doug and the team with their knowledge of Latin names for the various plant and mammal species.



The girls from Bonatla relax in the safari vehicle

Each school group was astounded at the amount of water the safari trucks from Stanley's Camp had to forge through. It was great fun for the children and tested the skill of the guides and drivers. For many of the students, the weekend saw a series of firsts – first time meeting elephants, first plane ride and first trip to the bush.

Elephant Outreach Programme Maun District School Visit #2 February 2008



The second school group in February was comprised of 3 schools from Maun District: Boseja Primary, Tamalakane, and Letsholathebe schools. Once again the students were full of incredible questions and experienced the magic moment of first touching an elephant.



A young boy from Tamalakane gets up close with Jabu



Students from Boseja Primary pose with Brown, a safari guide



Students experience a thrilling and wet ride

A French film crew that was making a documentary on water in the Okavango Delta joined the children. More excitement for an amazing day.



First plane ride – thumbs up! Mack Air pilots always give the children a smile and lots of support in their first flight!



Maun District School Visit #3 March 2008

The third visit of the school year, and the first of March, Living With Elephants hosted Shashe and Makalamabedi schools. Makalamabedi's remoteness had enabled a few of the students to have had a previous glimpse of wild elephants on the road. But, for 70% of the group, Jabu, Thembi and Morula were the first elephants ever viewed.



Thembi offers a close-up look at her teeth



Two boys from Makalamabedi work on their elephant drawings

Whilst in camp, the children (and teachers) spend some time sketching elephants. They have the opportunity to complete the same activity on the final day of Elephant Camp. The details on the second day are much more accurate complete with toenails and hairy ears!

Both children and teachers, reflect in their comments, that the time spent in the Elephant Outreach Programme has given them new insight into the dynamics of the Okavango Ecosystem and the integral relationship elephants play in the environment. This is exactly what we strive for!



At the end of the weekend, the group is awarded a certificate welcoming them to "The Herd"

Elephant Outreach Programme
Matshwane International School Visit
March, 2008



Matshwane International School was the first of Maun's private schools to venture out to Elephant Camp. The Standard 4 Class came out for 2 nights and 3 days and shared an incredible adventure. Although the class is comprised of diverse nationalities and speaks many languages, all of them found a common bond in their love of elephants.



Morula shows off her trunk to some young fans



Standard 4 poses on a termite mound

The children always enjoy taking a short nature hike in the area around camp and are thrilled with the discovery of various animal signs. Finding tracks in the sand or seeing where an elephant has walked is a magical moment. They also learn about various plant and tree species found in the delta.

Part of the Elephant Outreach Programme goal is to introduce ecological games and activities to the students and teachers. These can be played at home and again in class and taught to peers in the environmental clubs. One of the favourite games is "Oh Tlou" where students become elephants!



Elephant Girls play "Oh Tlou!"