

16th April 2020

My dearest friends, family and team,

Jambo All! Please excuse this long ass, drawn out email, I suggest you grab a coffee and have a seat to read it.

As we sit here in the lounge at Kipalo under one of those true African thunderstorms, sheets of rain sweeping across the pool and rivers of water flowing off the makuti roof. All of us pondering when and how this damn virus is going to end and what will the world look like when all is said and done. We must be positive and optimistic in our outlook. The rain is beautiful, almost exciting and bringing much needed health and life to the flora and fauna of Tsavo. Washing away all the red dust and leaving bright new colour and a new sense of greenery everywhere. The white and purple tissue paper flowers cover half the conservancy making the whole place look a bit like a fairy tale wedding.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/admwcdl74x4c1gg/Trenching%20Video%204-17-20%2C%206%2011%2015%20PM.mp4?dl=0>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/wqh4r5x99dal8fo/VIDEO-2020-04-17-17-11-13.mp4?dl=0>



Both our packs of African Painted Wild Dogs are back in the conservancy and having a ball.



The lack of movement and dust have left unpolluted and clear skies above the world. For the first time in many years, both Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya can be seen from office blocks in Nairobi. Apparently, the Ozone Layer has started to repair itself and for the first time in a hundred years dolphins have been seen in The Venice Canals.

I chose to be locked down here at Kipalo in the wilderness that I love and need for my wellbeing and because so much can be achieved during lockdown that will greatly enhance the product and experience when we finally see guests again. Also, and more importantly that conservation and community work can continue. Just yesterday a foot patrol arrested six charcoal burners chopping down 35-year old trees to make their illegal fuel. We have had to release them all without charge because they are simply desperate people from the local community that have been made redundant and / or lost their lively hoods and unlike in the Western world there is no social security structure here to take care of them.



They simply have nowhere else to turn but to the natural resources in their backyard. I'm also disappointed to announce that the same foot patrol found and dismantled eight poacher wire snares mostly aimed at dikdik and Kudu. This is the first time in five years that we are finding snares in the conservancy. We will wait in ambush for those poachers to come back and check their traps in order to send a clear message that no matter how bad things are, we will not tolerate poaching.

Early this morning we were called by KWS that one of the anti-poaching sections were hot on the tracks of three poachers inside Tsavo West National Park but headed in the general direction of our Conservancy. We have established two observation points on the highest rocks and set an ambush to get these guys on their way out. As at the time of writing this we don't have proper information as to what they were poaching or their target or whether they were armed or not.



We as a team, both here in Tsavo and in the Delta are in quite a predicament. The conservation fees that our guests pay covers a good portion of our ranger's salaries, patrol cars or boats, firearms, ammunition and ration packs. However, with a hundred percent disappearance of the business and reduction in the size of the team, we are concerned that a reduction in the ranger force, patrols and activities simultaneously with a huge increase in pressure on the very resources we are trying to protect for future generations, it could all end up being a free for all.

So, we are doing what we can to keep the rangers paid, fed and equipped and continue to try our hardest to continue helping the poorest members of the community. My God-Daughter Jaya, herself forfeited presents and spent the morning taking a basket of food to an old poachers' widow and what a difference that made.



Many of you have asked overtime what you could do to help, right now we could use all the support we could get to keep our rangers going and employed and to get some bare essentials for our local community. As I believe the only solution we have right now is to keep up and even increase our community assistance, support and employment and at the same time continue with an effective policing and enforcement to guard the wildlife and flora. Please feel free to contact me, Nikita, John, Danny, Shasa or Mario directly, if you think you could or would like to help.

Most importantly, however, stay safe, stay away from this damn virus, look after each other and keep busy to maintain mind, body and soul and please don't hesitate to ask if there is anything that we could do to help you out during this difficult time.

Mingi love and Salaams to you all.

Richard