



THE FUTURE OF WILDLIFE IS IN OUR HANDS

2 March 2016

Start

On this World Wildlife Day, the Endangered Wildlife Trust commends all involved on the success of the ground-breaker Hayi Laa project (Hayi Laa means “not here” in Shangaan), spearheaded in 2015 by the EWT with partner organisation Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme (TVEP). The Hayi Laa project aims to eradicate a range of social and wildlife crimes which negatively impact the people and wildlife in and around Hluvukani, a village west of the Manyeleti Game Reserve section of the Kruger National Park. The project is possible because of the financial support of the UK Prosperity Fund, which is administered by the British High Commission.



**WORLD
WILDLIFE DAY**
3 MARCH

The culmination of this project will be a community wide oath-taking to not poach; to report poachers known to operate in the area; and to not permit the presence of poachers in their community because wildlife is recognised as a community asset. The aforementioned oath-taking ceremony will take place on 5 March in Hluvukani followed by the unveiling of the Hayi Laa signage in the community.

Hluvukani is the first village to experience the integrated TVEP women’s rights workshops and the EWT’s poaching / illegal wildlife trade workshops in South Africa. More than 600 people participated in the workshops. Fiona Nicholson, TVEP’s Programme Director highlighted the success that the initiative has already had. “The satellite police station servicing the area has historically not been operational at all hours of the day. Since the workshops commenced, participating community members have taken it upon themselves to put pressure on officials so that the police station will remain open 24/7 in order to facilitate the reporting of incidents. The stakeholder forum will be vigilant going forward to ensure that the police station remains open and is properly manned at all times.”

The primary threats to the survival of wildlife include habitat destruction, the presence of alien invasive species, poaching and the increasing illegal trade in wildlife. The global illegal trade in wildlife

products is estimated to be worth billions of US Dollars, making it one of the most lucrative transnational organised criminal activities. Illegal wildlife trade has far-reaching impacts, as it affects the tourism industry as well as the livelihoods of local communities. Illegal wildlife trade thus hinders progress with regards to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Kirsty Brebner, project manager for the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Rhino Project stated, "Communities in many rural areas rely on ecosystem services for their survival, and thus the role of communities in the future of wildlife is being increasingly recognised. The Hayi Laa project model is a 'call to action' to communities for a zero tolerance attitude to wildlife crimes, while at the same time taking care of their own well-being. We are very proud to be part of this ground-breaking project."

The 3rd of March 2016 marks the third annual World Wildlife Day, an opportunity to not only celebrate the beauty and diversity of the wildlife with which we share our planet, but to remind us of the importance of the work done by the dedicated conservationists at the Endangered Wildlife Trust. The Endangered Wildlife Trust encourages all South Africans to take an oath of their own this World Wildlife Day. Pledge your support for conservation activities and play your part in protecting our wildlife.

Visit <http://www.ewt.org.za/RHINO/communities.html> <https://www.givengain.com/cause/2347/> to find out more about this initiative.

To donate to the cause, visit <https://www.givengain.com/cause/2347/>

End.

Contact: Kirsty Brebner
Rhino Project Manager
Endangered Wildlife Trust
Tel: +27 11 372 3600
kirstyb@ewt.org.za

and

Carla van Rooyen
Communications Manager
Endangered Wildlife Trust
Tel: +27 11 372 3600
carlav@ewt.org.za