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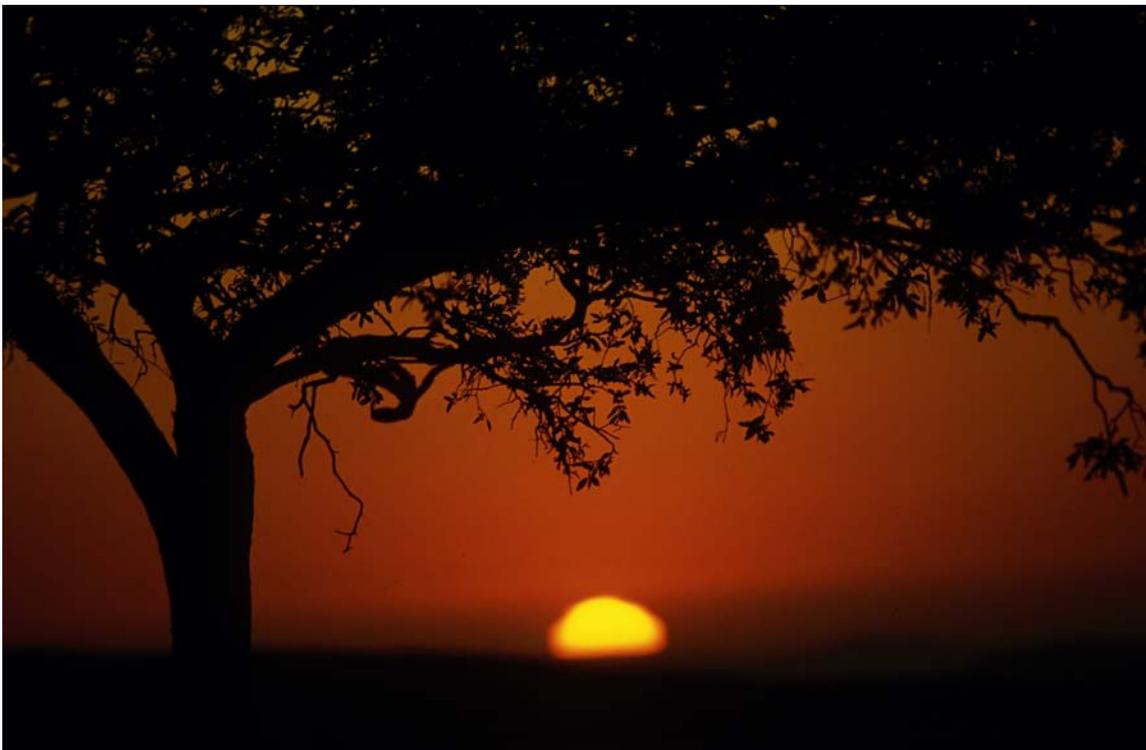
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Trade plus Aid Grant for the Honorary Rangers Rapid Action

Team (RATZ), South Luangwa, Zambia

Final Report

April 5th 2004



**The Honorary Rangers Rapid Action
Team (RATZ), now the South Luangwa Conservation Society
(SLCS), South Luangwa, Zambia
Before...**



RATS patrol member finds a snare, South Luangwa National Park, Zambia, October 2001
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As explained in the interim report (dated 19th September 2003), in July 2003, after several discussions with the Regional Manager of the South Luangwa Area Management Unit (*SLAMU*), the Area Warden of South Luangwa National Park and the Director General of the Zambia Wildlife Authority (*ZAWA*), it was agreed that the *RATZ* programme would be subsumed into the South Luangwa Conservation Society (*SLCS*), a registered body with a formal working agreement with *ZAWA*, a Memorandum of Understanding (*MOU*) and an active and representative Board.

Under the new agreement with *ZAWA*, *SLCS* scouts are now gazetted (previously they were not authorised to carry firearms). The training programme implemented under *RATZ* will continue. Currently six scouts have received full training and the remaining staff will attend the *ZAWA* Practical Anti-Poaching Skills course as soon as funds are available. The training programme lasts for six weeks, but regular training days and refresher days are conducted throughout the year.

SLCS employees are all from the local communities. Many of the individuals employed are former wildlife personnel – former scouts or community-based officers - who were retrenched during the transition phase. *SLCS* draws upon their experience and provides meaningful and ongoing employment to these individuals, utilising their skills and developing institutional and community knowledge. The *SLCS* scouts and their families are accommodated at the *SLCS* Headquarters, based in the Mfuwe area just a few minutes from the park. *SLCS* currently employs +/- twenty personnel from the local communities. They bring a wide range of experience, including formal wildlife management training, veterinary and tsetse control, book-keeping, and experience working as members of the community scout programme. They receive monthly salaries and housing for themselves and their immediate families. In addition, *SLCS* provides training for staff and will ensure continued primary education for the children of *SLCS* personnel. A steering committee has been formed to provide strategic development and financial oversight. Members of the steering committee include individuals from the Board, the local donor community (tour operators and individuals) as well as the Co-Ordinator, Chairperson and a representative from *ZAWA*.

Experience has demonstrated that poaching often starts in the villages with the local people. Much of the information obtained by *SLCS* scouts comes from informers in the villages, which is then passed on to *ZAWA* to be dealt with accordingly. By working with people at community level, *SLCS* is working towards establishing improved conservation practices and effecting a positive change in perception towards the environment and its wildlife. As an organisation, *SLCS* has made small but incremental changes that have resulted in enormous success, increased awareness and a positive attitude at grass roots level which can, and should, continue. Along with continued support from local tour operators, individual donations and the £15,000 grant awarded by Trade plus Aid, *SLCS*, formerly *RATZ*, had an extremely successful year.

- *SLCS* have increased their staff and at present have +/- 20 employees, five more than when they received the Trade plus Aid Grant in March 2003.
- Most of the scouts are still housed at the 'Rat Base' in the town of Mfuwe, which they have now been renting for the last two years. The structure of the team has become more professional and they now have a full time Bookkeeper/Store man who issues rations for patrols and keeps stock of everything. They also have a new unit leader who manages and organises all patrols. Until recently they had a small classroom at the base and employed a teacher to work on-site. It has since been decided that it would be better to spend those resources by sending the children to the local school, thereby supporting a wider body of the community.

- Having rented the plot which houses the *RATZ* (now *SLCS*) base for two years, *SLCS* successfully approached the local chief (Chief Kakumbi who is also a member of the Board of *SLCS*) who has agreed to provide a large plot of land not far from where the current base is housed. It is easily accessible by road, is in a central area and is in close proximity to the *ZAWA* head quarters, which *SLCS* scouts visit on a regular basis. A grant has now been secured for development of a permanent base on this site.
- Prior to receiving funding the *SLCS* vehicle had been off the road for several months, thereby limiting the range of activities. The additional income from the grant meant that as well as being able to purchase a second vehicle, *SLCS* were also able to have the engine of the first vehicle completely reconditioned. As a result they were able to conduct patrols further afield, providing a massive morale booster for the team. Having two operational vehicles has made it possible for patrols to cover much wider geographical areas, for snap roadblocks to be set up on a regular basis and for anti-poaching operations to be conducted at will. The day-to-day operations of the team remain more or less the same: anti-snaring and anti-fishing activities including long patrols in the park, short patrols, roadblocks and ambushes. Having invested more energy into investigations, *SLCS* now have a reliable network of informers, which has greatly improved its ability to apprehend individuals engaged in snaring and poaching activities. Operations for the rainy season also improved. Between December and March/April poaching in the park increases dramatically as most camps are closed and many areas are inaccessible by land. Target areas were identified and we proposed to *ZAWA* that they set up three new anti-poaching fly camps, two in the park and one in the Nsefu Sector. These camps, all in areas that are heavily poached during the rains, were manned by *SLCS* personnel and *ZAWA* scouts.
- Increased funds enabled the purchase of new uniforms, a massive morale booster to the staff. Each scout has been issued with two sets including new boots, rain boots, socks and caps.
- The complementary relationship with *ZAWA* has continued to improve to the extent that *SLCS* was set up with the full endorsement of Head Office, the area Manager for South Luangwa and the Warden of South Luangwa.
- All personnel have finally been insured against injury and death with a Lusaka based insurance company.
- In February 2004 Rachel Mc Robb attended a Game Capture Course in South Africa which provided training in the following areas:
 - Background to pharmacology in general with particular reference to drugs that are used in the chemical restraint of wildlife.
 - Physiology and general anatomy of wild animals
 - Basic wildlife immobilization principles
 - Chemical capture from the ground and air
 - Individual species requirements
 - Equipment used to administer different drugs
 - Stress and mortality\Transportation of wild animals
 - Management of the release of wild animals

Most importantly, however, it will ensure that there is now at least one qualified individual who can dart animals in and around South Luangwa to remove snares set by poachers. This was not an option before as there are no qualified individuals within the South Luangwa *ZAWA* office.

Results

The results for 2003 are as follows and despite activities being somewhat curtailed during the transition from *RATZ* to *SLCS*, there were significant successes.

Snares removed	80
Ivory recovered	27 pieces ivory
Poachers/illegal fishermen arrested	16 poachers, 42 arrests
Confiscations	35 firearms & 1 leopard skin
Others	5 drying racks and 5 poachers camps
No. of days on patrol	223 days out of a possible 243 days

- In June 2003, *SLCS* conducted a joint undercover operation with *ZAWA*, using the new vehicle and two of *SLCS* scouts. From the results you can see they had a very successful trip.
- Out of the 42 arrests, 20 people have been sentenced. Their sentences vary from 6 months to 5 years.
- In September 2003, *SLCS* also assisted *ELAMU* (East Luangwa Area Management Unit) with US\$600 for an undercover operation. This eventually led to the arrest of 2 ivory dealers and the confiscation of 18 pieces of ivory.



Results for 2004 so far are as follows:

- In January *SLCS* scouts arrested 1 elephant poacher, confiscated 3 firearms, removed 14 snares and confiscated 3 illegal fishing nets. The suspect has been sentenced to 15 months in prison.
- In February *SLCS* scouts removed 23 wire snares.

Reconciliation of funds (£ Sterling)

TRAINING **6,857.00**

Training: tactics, field craft, radio procedure, investigations, statement taking, use of GPS, compass and map navigation, Zambia Wildlife Act, physical fitness, drill, weapon handling, methods of instruction & presentation, first aid, HIV/AIDS awareness, introduction to forensics, teamwork, customer care, vehicle checkpoints

TOYOTA LANDCRUISER **3,412.00**

EQUIPMENT **1,200.00**

BANANA BOAT & ENGINE **2,500.00**

INSURANCE **800.00**

TOTAL **14,796.00**

Now...





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RATS
Zambia, 2003
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