

NEWSLETTER

MARCH-APRIL 2016

“BE PART OF THE
JOURNEY,
BE PART OF THE
SOLUTION”

MOPANE'S NEW POOLED UNITS

Since our last update on the completion of the new units here at Mopane Bush Lodge, we are well impressed with how they turned out. Although there are a few more tweaks and some small details that need to be added they are well worth a visit as they are very comfortable. The new private swimming pools are a great hit with our guests after morning activities. It is a great way to relax, get away from the midday heat and



take in the serenity that is just outside your chalet while sipping on a cold beverage.

After a good night's rest, what better way to start your day than with a cup of freshly brewed Nespresso coffee from the machine in your room, sitting on the porch and contemplating what the new day has in store from mother nature's side?

| *The Mopane Team*



SUMMARY

- Mopane's new pooled units
- World Travel Market Africa Expo
- The life and times of a mopane worm
- A nutritious delicacy
- Nekel farm purchase
- Leopard sightings
- New postcards
- Introducing Tara and James
- Time is running out!

WORLD TRAVEL MARKET AFRICA EXPO

The WTM-Africa show was held in Cape Town from 6-8 April 2016. Mopane Bush Lodge attended the show in a bid to attract more guest to this beautiful area of South Africa. One of our objectives was to reveal and share a glimpse of this special place we all have come to love and cherish with new people.

We were overwhelmed with the response we had at our stand, and already have numerous positive feedback by securing some new business and interest from tour operators.

Over 80 new contacts were made and all were excited about the future prospects for SUV, Mapesu and Mopane alike.

In a few days we will be off to the INDABA expo in Durban for the next show, and we look forward to making new contacts and promote our special brand. If you are in the area during May 7-9th we would love to see you there at stand DEC1C09!



THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A MOPANE WORM

A couple of times a year our bush becomes infested with some very special worms - the Mopane worm.

The Mopane worm, is bivoltine in most areas, meaning two generation are produced each year. The first major eruption generally beings between mid-November and January followed by a minor second outbreak between March and May. Both occurrences tend to happen under ideal conditions which tend to be a few weeks after major rains.

Although, they are called Mopane worms because they feed almost exclusively on the Mopane trees leaves, which we find a lot of in this area, they are in fact caterpillars from the larvae of the Emperor Moth (*Gonimbrasia Belina*).

Their life cycle is quite complex from larva to caterpillar, through metamorphoses and into a full grown moth. It all starts when the time is right, as the eggs are laid by the large and attractive moths. Small worms hatch from the eggs and molt four or five times before they reach maturity prior to their transformation into the large winged moths. It is the last stage that is most sought after for harvesting, when they are at their largest size as a caterpillar (worm). After harvesting, any that remain will abandon the trees and drop to the ground to pupate in the earth. The life cycle is completed when the adult moths emerge from the pupae, mate and lay eggs once again.

Some images from wikipedia.org



A hatched or parasitized egg cluster on a Mopane leaf.

Gregarious first instar caterpillars feeding on a Mopane leaf – the first three instars are always gregarious, while the fourth and fifth are always solitary, a strategy which regulates their physiological constraint.



A late instar caterpillar feeding on a Mopane tree.



The short-lived emperor moth is the final stage. The un-feathered antennae seen here indicates a female.

A NUTRITIOUS DELICACY

Harvesting and preparing the Mopane worm:

Although, most westernized people tend to have feelings of repulsion and disgust at the fact of eating insects, much of the remaining population of the world find them tasty and nutritious.

Mopane worms have been a delicacy and important source of protein, mineral and vitamins for many people in rural parts of southern Africa for generations.

It's during the weeks into the rainy season that harvesting takes place when the worms are at their plumpest. Worms are hand-picked in the wild, often by women and children.

The caterpillars can be as thick as a cigar and as long as a finger. Their color is vibrant yellow, white and red/orange patterned with one black end being the head. To prepare the worms, they are first pinch at the tail end to get rid of the innards. The traditional method of preserving the worms are to boil them first in salted water, then sun-dried or smoked. The sun dried form can last for months without need for refrigeration, making them a valuable source of protein and nutrition during deprivation.

If the idea of chewing off bits of a Mopane worm still doesn't appeal to you, here are some facts on how healthy they are for us.

The Mopane worms are packed with



nutritional value. For example, the iron content of beef is 6 mg per 100 grams of dry weight, however these caterpillars pack a whopping 31 mg of iron per 100 grams. That's over 5 times the iron! According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), they are also a good source of potassium, sodium, calcium, phosphorous, magnesium, zinc, manganese and copper.

The grey dried Mopane worms are generally eaten raw as a crisp snack. Alternatively, Mopane worms can be soaked to rehydrate, before being fried until they are crunchy, or stewed. One

popular recipe, recommends that they are cooked with onion, tomatoes and spices and then served with nshima (white cornmeal) or even chips. Yummy!

Definitely a fun activity to try next time you come to visit Mopane Bush Lodge during the Mopane worm season. I'm sure the chef will keep a few extra recipes here for you to try!

Happy Mopane worm season everyone!

Brigitte, Senior Field Guide

NEKEL FARM PURCHASE

Towards the end of 2014, Shared Universe Ventures (owners of Mapesu Private Game Reserve and Mopane Bush Lodge) was made aware that one of our neighboring properties would be going on auction. The Nekel farm, which was previously used for both cattle and hunting, joins Mapesu Private Game Reserve on its western boundary. Excited by the prospect of increasing the size of our reserve we quickly mobilized to secure funding.

The property ticked all the right boxes for us. It had additional staff housing, a very tidy workshop, a building which could later be converted into a research center and terrain which offered dramatic views of the Limpopo Valley. The vegetation is less dense than Mapesu's PGR's 5,851 hectares, however the grass cover is of good quality and the flora includes a gigantic baobab as well as numerous Kemifera trees. Although we had attended and won the auction the sellers eventually decided the price was

too low and we entered into lengthy negotiations which eventually culminated in the official purchase of the farm on the 1st of March 2016.

We hit the ground running as Christof and his team quickly began removing the old cattle fence around the property and replacing it with a 2.4m high game fence. Up until this point we have already lodged all the poles, stays and y stands on the northern as well as western boundary. Now all that is left to do is pull the wires between the poles and add the electrification. Once this is complete the fence between the Mapesu and Nekel will be removed effectively increasing the size of Mapesu Private Game Reserve from 5851ha to 7,221ha (17,843 acres). We are very excited to be offering our guests and shareholders as well as the numerous animal species on the reserve the opportunity to roam across this vast expanse of African bush.

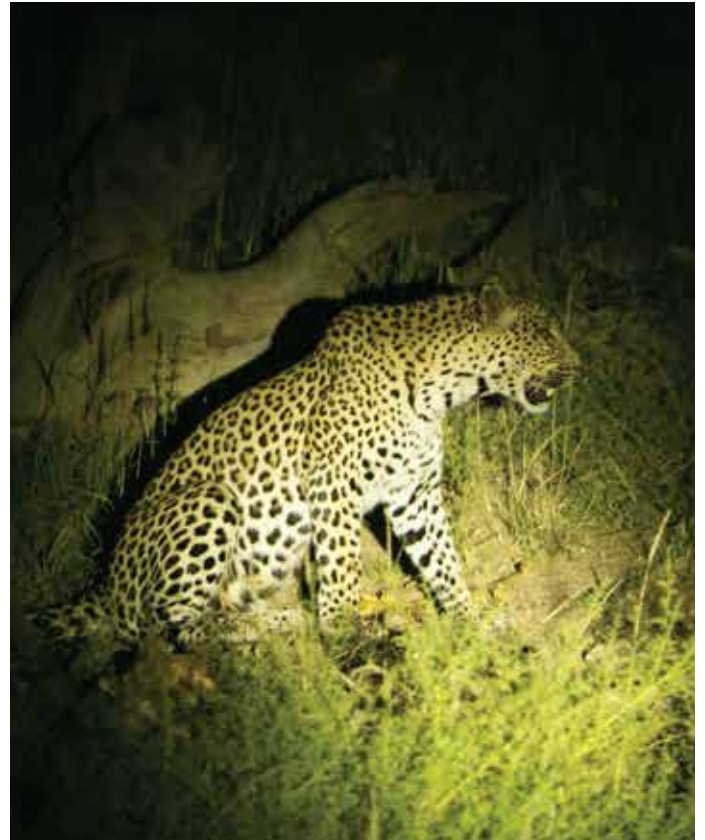
LEOPARD SIGHTINGS

A flash in the corner of your eye, a far off silhouette against the setting sun, a dusky approach from between the shrubbery; a leopard is not easy to spot.

Many people visit South Africa for a chance to catch a glimpse of this elusive member of the big 5. The prince amongst cats of the African Savannah has begun to show its face in the Kingdom of Mapungubwe and Mapesu.

Leopards have the widest range of all the big cats. Their agility and adaptability to the surrounding and changing environment alongside their secretive and predominantly solitary existence contribute to their survivability. These carnivores tend to favor rocky landscapes, dense bush, and riverine forests which makes our chances for a viewing more probable. In fact, over the past year we have seen many signs of leopard activity at Mapesu, clues such as tracks, scat, a fresh carcass in the bush... or even a distinct call in the morning or evening lends us a hint to their proximity.

How remarkably fortunate are we to be able to have a fair quantity of good sightings; on top of the kopje near the entrance of the reserve, three times at our new dam, several times at Christoff's house, and on the road leading to the lodge and so on. Where will we see them next? **Come join the adventure in searching for this amazing and beautiful creature.**



NEW POSTCARDS

Thanks to the initiative of Paula Knipping and using her wonderful artwork, we are in the midst of creating lovely postcards. Mopane Bush Lodge in collaboration with Shared Universe Foundation will be selling the post cards to the public to help raise funds toward various causes such as:

- ✓ The rhino ambulance – a specifically designed and equipped truck that can go into the field and transport large injured animals back to base. It will be the first of its kind in South Africa
- ✓ Rhino orphanage – a specialized care facility with a medical clinic and stables to cater to the growing need of orphaned or injured animals
- ✓ Biodiversity conservation - an underrated issue which involves restoring the natural environment as a key component of the sustainable balanced ecosystem upon all wildlife depends.

The cards should be available this June, and be available for purchase at our Lodge, from the web site and exchanged for a donation to The Shared Universe Foundation.



We will provide more details in our next newsletter.

INTRODUCING TARA AND JAMES

The Shared Universe Foundation is pleased to welcome two new Executive Trustees, Tara Lal and James Hill.



Tara is a proud Indian and active conservationist having worked with existing projects in South Africa and Botswana.

Visa permitting, she would like to be based in South Africa once she has completed her Master's Degree at Imperial College London, and ultimately be the acknowledge expert straddling international and local conservation work in both Africa and India.

Tara Lal Taralal@shareduniversefoundation.org



James Hill is based in the United Kingdom, bringing with him many years of experience in corporate finance and accounting. He exhibits a keen sense of paying attention to detail, and has strong connections with Sub-Saharan Africa and is a passionate conservationist.

James Hill james@shareduniversefoundation.org

ELEPHANTS IN NEED OF A NEW HOME!

It's with great concern that we bring forth the **plight of a family of elephants** that are in desperate **need for a new home**. They are located 100 kilometers from Mapesu/Mopane and will need transportation to our location. Not only will we need to arrange transport of the five elephants with vet-care and security measures to ensure their safe transfer but we also have to complete the fencing which is just over 7,200 hectares (18,000 acres) of the game reserve. This mandatory by-code fencing will help to keep poachers out while giving the animals ample room to grow and wander their new region in relative safety.

For every **USD \$5** a meter (3.28 ft) of fencing can be achieved and brought up to code to ensure the animal's safety. It's a **HUGE** task to arrange nearly 38 kilometers (23.6 miles), **so every bit counts!**

If you would like to **donate directly** to the fund, you can do so via Shared Universe Foundation's secure payment gateway by going to www.ammado.com/nonprofit/170629 or search for Shared Universe Foundation at the Ammado.com website.

Please **spread the word** about their plight by liking the **Facebook** page and sharing the link in your own post. Search for us by typing in Shared Universe Foundation.

Thanks for your support!



INVITATION TO JOIN THE ADVENTURE

Come be part of this important project of conserving the amazing South African Wilderness! We invite you to join us on the journey and become an investor in Shared Universe Ventures.

Our vision is to become one of the best wildlife conservancies in all of Africa, offering a hands-on, up-close and personal experience to our investors while being a commercial success.

- ✓ **Enjoy a game reserve** without the complexities and cost of personally managing one
- ✓ **Contribute to the preservation** of the great South African landscape and wildlife including the endangered rhino
- ✓ No timeshare, you are a **co-owner**
- ✓ Realize your **own dream lodge**
- ✓ Enjoy the **rights to use the Mopane Bush Lodge** and other communal facilities
- ✓ **Leave a legacy** for future generations

For more information come visit the website: www.shareduniverseafrica.com/our-investments