

A MOMENT TO REVIEW AUGUST 2019



PHOTO: SAHIL FAUZDAR

A MOMENT TO REVIEW

Dear Friends of Mapesu,

It is exactly five years ago since our exciting ride started at Shared Universe.

There have been so many projects, but we want to mention a few. With all the updates at the Mopane Bush Lodge, things are really looking lovely. We've added new chalets with splash pools, put up four self-catering units, transformed and updating the bar and swimming pool, upgrade the waterhole in front of the lodge, as well as created a two new zones on the reserve. The first is the new campsite and the second is the New Mapesu Wilderness Camp, which you can learn more at their websites. www.mopanebushlodge.com www.mapesu.com

Conservation has always been at the heart of the project, and we have done many great deeds. But this year, we have been very active during, and especially heading into the winter season, with the introduction of some magnificent and rare animals. We successfully introduced a female cheetah to accompany the male one (and vice versa, of course). We introduced a group of 10 sable antelopes; added truckloads of the regular plains game, to update the gene pool and to diversify the bloodlines. Plus, the huge achievement of receiving our first rhino family to the property and most recently, a small pack of wild dogs (painted wolves) was released, which we will profile in next month's newsletter.



PHOTO: CASSANDRA CHIANG



PHOTO: AXEL PRIMMER

SUMMARY

- A moment to review
- Scythe-horns worth showing off
- Update on Mapesu Research Programme
- Meet the team

Building this area back to the authentic and natural environment has been rewarding, but doing so also costs a lot of money, which you can see have been spent wisely. Things like collaring many animals; having a professional anti-poaching team; increase our staffing overall to ensure we give you the best service possible; devoting our efforts in research; and upgrading the much-needed staff housing. Of which, sponsorship for the latter is open. Anyone kind enough to help uplift our small community by sponsoring a home will have a plaque dedicated in their name to one of them. For more information, just reach out to us - contact@shareduniverseafrica.com

What about wanting to adopt an animal? Anyone adopting an animal and spends at least USD 3,000 has the right to give a name to one of the newly introduced animals. So far a few Wild Dogs are still available for 'adoption,' as well as looking for sponsors to shortly introduce hippos in the very near future.

As you know, your continued support is very much appreciated. We kindly request your participation by asking those around for donations so that we are able to continue our conservation activities, improve the region, help stimulate jobs,

and provide decent living standards to all that work here. And all the while, allowing people to have an up-close and personal experience at the reserve that will not only make their photograph book happy but their hearts' too.

Have you ever thought about being a co-owner of a reserved focused on conservation? We would love to have additional investors into the Shared Universe Project – the owners of Mapesu Private Game Reserve, Mopane Bush Lodge, and Wilderness Camp. Starting from USD 10,000 one can become co-owner of a Game Reserve in Africa, enjoy the conservation efforts, while utilizing the accommodations at a discount, but more importantly truly make a lasting impact in this region while leaving a legacy behind for future generations.

We graciously ask you to look around and see who would be interested in being part of our adventure in helping to maintain and nurture this abode for endangered species in northern Limpopo. The details of such investment can be found on our website www.shareduniverseafrica.com or by contacting us directly at contact@shareduniverseafrica.com

We look forward to hearing from you and hope to see you soon,

The SUV Team

SCYTHE-HORNS WORTH SHOWING OFF

If you have ever seen a sable antelope grazing in the grasslands or savanna woodlands, then you are one of the fortunate!

These incredible animals are fierce protectors and have been known to fight off predators. Not surprising, as their majestic and impressive ringed horns rise vertically and curve towards the back. Some horns can be as long as the animal itself, with the record being 154 cm. Although a blessing for the animals in a fight for dominance, exhibition, and protection, sadly, it is also a curse as they are prized in trophy hunting. Here at Mapesu, we focus on the re-introduction of native species, and the only hunting permitted is through the lens of a photo camera!

Not only are their horns a fascinating feature, so are the dark color of their fur. New-born calves are lighter in color, sandy camouflaged, and as they grow, they get darker with adult males becoming very dark brown to black in comparison to the

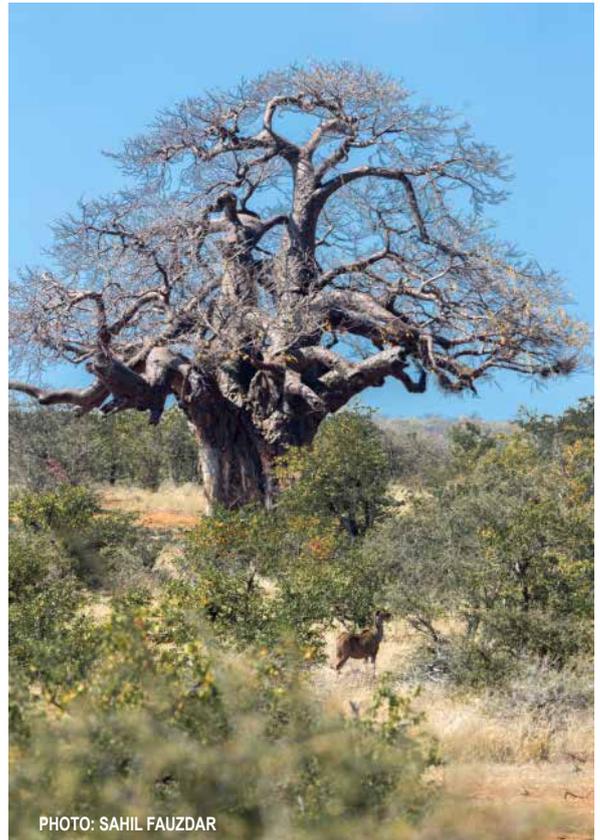


PHOTO: SAHIL FAUZDAR

females, which can be more reddish-brown. They run in herds between 10-30 individuals in a matriarchal social structure and with a dominant female and one adult male, bull. Once the calves mature into their teens (3-4 years), they are later kicked out and form a small bachelor herd. At 180 -270 kilos, they can live up to 16 years in the wild. They eat mostly grasses, but also munch on leaves and herbs. Their territory ranges in the southern savannas of Africa – Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. It is believed that there are only 7,000 in South Africa.

So it was with great pleasure that we introduced a small herd of 10 sables with some even pregnant to Mapesu in May and thanks to the research programme, we have documented the pregnant female has already given birth! We invite you to discover the newest and most regal additions to the Mapesu family personally.



UPDATE ON MAPESU RESEARCH PROGRAMME

We have been very busy at the Mapesu Research Programme the last few months. We have released many animals onto the reserve as part of our goal of rewilding the area and creating an area renowned for saving species from extinction. We have also renovated the volunteer house and made it cater to more volunteers and students. We also welcome a new staff member that joined us in June. We are looking forward to Nadine sharing her knowledge and skills with us (read more about her at our Meet the Team section). With all of these additions to the reserve, we can now offer more research topics and experiences for our students.



Another major update is the upgrade to the research house. We can now house 18 students and volunteers at one time: two twin rooms and three dorm-style rooms with separate male and female rooms. We now have six separate toilets and showers...no more queuing up in the mornings! A room has been created as a staff room and research office too. We have revamped the living, study, and social area as well. The new Mapesu Wilderness Camp has been built across the road, and volunteers now have a swimming pool that they can enjoy when time allows!

For the second year running, we have hosted groups of UK veterinary students from various universities. They have all successfully completed their EMS (Extra Mural Studies) pre-clinical placements with us, gaining new skills and knowledge, which is vital for their future careers.

One such student that we would like to mention is Nadine Closset from Belgium. She completed a 14-week internship with us. During her visit, she worked extremely hard on her undergraduate thesis: The effects of mopane bush clearing on biodiversity and grass composition in Mapesu Private Game Reserve, South Africa. Nadine's thesis aimed to get a better understanding of the ecological restoration taking place at Mapesu; this study was novel and has not been studied before. In total, 40 sites were selected where vegetation and bird surveys were conducted. The results showed that biodiversity of birds is greater in the restored areas, and although there is greater grass coverage, it is of lesser nutritional quality. This study has opened up further questions for how best to re-wild Mapesu and has kick-started a long-term research project for years to come.

We are very proud of her achievement as she successfully completed her bachelors 'cum laude' with distinction – the greatest accolade! This thesis also provides Mapesu with useful information for future management decisions, and for conservation on the reserve.



Thank you and congratulations, Nadine!

Check out our new Video on Youtube, type in Mapesu Research Programme Conservation in the Youtube search or visit this link: <https://youtu.be/xEjTgmUAciq>

PHOTO CREDIT: CASSANDRA CHIANG



MEET THE TEAM

Nadine was born in France, where her love for nature started when she was raised by her grandparents in the countryside. She completed her Bachelor's degree in science in France.

In order to achieve her dreams of travel, and also to gain some experience, she went to South Africa at the start of 2015 to study caracal and leopard distribution at the Mogalakwena Research Centre. During that time, her passion for mammals (especially felines) and conservation increased. She decided to pursue her studies in South Africa and started her MSc degree in Biological Sciences through the University of Cape Town to assess diversity and characteristics of communities of the small mammals' species at Karoo sites vulnerable to shale-gas exploration, and other land uses. She is currently helping with volunteer/student supervision and research programmes at Mapesu as well as with social media.



Bookings or inquiries for the MAPESU WILDERNESS TENTED CAMP, CAMPSITE, SELF CATERING & MOPANE BUSH LODGE can be arranged by directly via the website Book Now or by sending an email to bookings@mopanebushlodge.com or calling +27 (0) 15 534 7906

www.mopanebushlodge.com
www.mapesu.com
www.shareduniverseafrica.com
www.shareduniversefoundation.org
www.shareduniverse.co.uk

Want to be involved in our conservation efforts and leave a legacy? contact@shareduniverseafrica.com

If you would like more information on the RESEARCH PROGRAMME, send Amy an email amy@mapesu.com

