

# UMPHAFA PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE



Colchester Zoo and Action for the Wild purchased land to form the UmPhafa Private Nature Reserve in 2005. We have since been working to rehabilitate the land and recreate the historical animal populations on the reserve.

In 2022, Action for the Wild donated £322,070.53 to ensure the continued running of the reserve; from employing field rangers, maintenance and intern staff to ensuring continued protection of our wildlife species, as well as giving the opportunity for interns to be educated about life on a reserve.

## 2022 GAME COUNT OF VISIBLE SPECIES

70	Blesbok	10	Mountain reedbuck
133	Blue Wildebeest	45	Nyala
10	Common Reedbuck	10	Ostrich
48	Eland	42	Red Hartebeest
40	Giraffe	130	Warthog
25	Grey Duiker	60	Waterbuck
272	Impala	251	Zebra
250	Kudu		

## KEY EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

### January

- A new workshop was installed to protect the vehicles on the northern side of the Reserve, as well as a small workshop to store equipment and tools.
- Improvements were made to the rondavel at the Sully intern accommodation, making it liveable, and a new bathroom was installed.

### March

- 2 female Wild Dogs arrived, which eventually left in May, going to Lapalala Reserve, near Limpopo, to start a new pack.
- A rogue Leopard was captured in the community with UmPhafa's help and moved to Phinda, a reserve in Zululand.
- 2 new drones were purchased to help combat poaching incursions.

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## KEY EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

### April

- Female Rhino, Ambalo, gave birth to a healthy male calf.
- The Reserve joined the Game Ranger Association to provide insurance in case our field rangers are injured in the line of duty.

### May

- 80 Blesbok were released.
- The management team received training on the new C'more App, which focuses on the security of the Reserve.
- We employed 5 ladies from the community who collected over 800kgs in pecan nuts, which were sold.

### June

- 11 Bushbuck were released.
- Bees were removed from the lodge and old tennis courts at Elworthy as they were becoming a danger to the team. They were relocated with the help of Bushveld Bees.
- We won a BIAZA Conservation Award for 'work in conservation in the field' for the Wild Dogs we looked after in 2021. We bonded these Wild Dogs and they eventually went to Malawi. Unfortunately, in November, they were killed by poachers when their waterhole was poisoned.
- Jim Green Shoes sponsored 12 pairs of field ranger boots for our rangers.

### July

- Fire breaks were completed and block burns started.

### August

- The research work continued on the study of the African Mottled Eel lifestyle and dispersal in the Tugela River, with studies finishing in October.
- A new solar pump was installed at the energiser field to feed water from the Tugela River to one of the main dams, saving on daily electricity costs.



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## KEY EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

### August *continued...*

- We employed 5 ladies from the community to collect thatch for us for use on the bushcamp roof, which was completed in December.

### September

- A new diesel tank was installed on the north section of the Reserve to avoid using excessive diesel at Elworthy.
- With the threat of foot & mouth reaching the Reserve, 4-wheel washes were built at the main gates.

### October

- Contact was made with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation who carry out research all over Africa and are the only NGO that concentrates solely on the conservation and management of Giraffe in Africa. In 2023 they will be coming to perform an assessment of Giraffe on UmPhafa, and those in the local area, to establish numbers and species.
- Archaeologists visited the Reserve to study Iron Age ruins on part of UmPhafa; Vertrek.

### November

- Improvements made to the ranger cottage were completed on the northern side of the Reserve.

### December

- 2 male Wild Dogs joined us from Somkhanda Reserve; they will eventually be moving on in 2023.
- Blue Crane chicks have been spotted on UmPhafa, which we believe is a first for us.

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We hosted 67 interns this year, including Writtle University College and East Coast College, and also hosted 39 students from KZN University who came to do their practical soil studies. Howick Children's Home sent 11 children with their tutor to study tracks and signs to give them an idea of a different career path in the future. We gave waste management lessons to a local school and the top 17 learners visited the reserve for game drives.

2022 saw a record amount of rain (1,212mm) on UmPhafa since the recording of rain statistics began in 1959.

Poaching continues to be an issue, with a total of 419m of fence stolen, 49 animals taken, 153 incursion attempts, 13 snares removed and 97 instances of trespassing by poachers, with or without dogs. Despite this, there has been an increase of 490 animals present on the reserve throughout the year, with Impala, Wildebeest and Zebra all doing well. The babies came later in 2022 with some only just arriving in late December, which is unusual.

We recorded 9 new species on the reserve, ranging from dragonflies and birds to insects and plants.

**In 2023, the team shall again be hosting interns to help with the Reserve management tasks and focusing their efforts on protecting species, bringing in new animal genes and hopefully maximising bulk grazing animals. Following on from the rains of 2022, energy will be aimed at repairing fences and roads, carrying out more bush clearing sessions and reducing the number of alien plants on the Reserve.**

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