

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



ACTION
FOR THE
WILD

Charity No. 1105621

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 2021, Action for the Wild donated £254,246.84 to ensure the continued running of the Reserve, from employing field rangers and reserve management staff, to ensuring continued protection of our wildlife species.

2021 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

April

- New reserve managers, Anthony Smith and Amanda Warren, took over the running of UmPhafa.
- 3 female African wild dogs joined us for 3 months. UmPhafa is responsible for the initial bonding of new packs before they move to new reserves.
- All rhinos dehorned and a new ear notching system implemented to ensure we can identify each individual from a distance.
- All relevant staff received first aid training.

May

- 5 male African wild dogs arrived to join the females for two months.
- Game capture carried out on the reserve to remove species that are over carrying capacity. 53 animals were removed; Zebra, Kudu and Waterbuck
- Rangers received in house telemetry training

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Private Nature Reserve



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KEY EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

June

- Three research visits conducted over the course of the year studying the life cycle of the African Mottled Eel. Eels were captured in long nets, weighed, measurements taken of the length and eyes and then fitted with a tracker to enable the research team to understand the eel's lifestyle going forwards. The eels were then safely released back into the river.

July

- The 8 wild dogs left UmPhafa and were successfully reintroduced into Malawi. The pack was fitted with a mix of satellite and radio collars to facilitate the continual monitoring of their location and habitat use and ensure their long-term protection in their new reserve. Camera trap footage has subsequently shown a litter of healthy pups.
- All firebreaks completed on the reserve to prevent runaway fires.

September

- Approval attained for adequate fence enclosure which is the first step in the process of getting cheetah and buffalo on the reserve, and possibly even black rhino.
- Female rhino Vukela gave birth to a health calf.
- Renovations commenced at Sully house, which will be the main intern accommodation from 2022. This work was completed in December.
- Assisted Ezemvelo Wildlife in attempts to trap a leopard and remove it from local community land.

October

- Our bull rhino was translocated off the reserve leaving behind numerous offspring on the reserve. In future, we will bring in a new bull to maximise genetics.





KEY EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

October (Continued)

- Our first ever Lappet-faced vulture spotted on the Reserve. Using the bird's tag number, we found out that the bird was tagged as a fledgling at Imfolozi Nature Reserve during October 2020. He was then seen on Manyoni Reserve on 6th September 2021 and flew over to UmPhafa in October 2021. Manyoni is roughly a 5 hour drive away from the reserve but when flying is probably a few hours less! The young vulture stayed at UmPhafa for 3 days whilst he fed on a blesbok carcass which had recently been killed by a leopard.

November

- Water delivered to the local community due to water shortages.

Unfortunately, due to Covid, 2021 was very quiet with no interns able to visit until David, our new intern coordinator, was able to join us in September on a six month stay. Thankfully with restrictions lifting, 2022 seems more promising with the first four interns arriving on the 4th January 2022.

With restrictions in place in South Africa and lack of employment, we have seen high numbers of incursions on the reserve, with fencing stolen on 7 occasions, 11 snares found and removed, 72 incursion attempts, 35 instances where poachers were inside the reserve with or without dogs and unfortunately 22 animals taken by poachers.

Despite an increase in poaching, our animal species are continuing to thrive and breed with the eland, impala, wildebeest, kudu and zebra populations doing very well in 2021.

In 2022, we will continue with our work to promote and protect the wildlife populations on UmPhafa and also look forward to interns returning to the reserve once again to help us with our management activities. Our focus will be to continue our efforts to bring cheetah and buffalo to UmPhafa and to increase numbers of our existing populations to maximise genetics.

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A white rhinoceros is walking towards the left on a dirt path. The rhino's skin is thick and wrinkled, and it has a small horn on its snout. The background is a blurred natural setting with green foliage and a stone wall.

COLCHESTER ZOO EMERGENCY FUND

Following the unprecedented closure of Colchester Zoo due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the trustees of Action for the Wild agreed to initiate a fundraising call for donations to the zoo's emergency fund to help provide support for animal care related costs, including keeper wages.

In total, due to kind donations from Action for the Wild donors, £24,445.44 was transferred to the emergency fund.

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FISHER'S ESTUARINE MOTH BREEDING PROGRAMME

The Fisher's Estuarine Moth is a rare and highly threatened species. The main stronghold for the species is the Walton Backwaters area of the North Essex coast, where the majority of the population is found at Skipper's Island. This key site for the moth is severely threatened by flooding, as a consequence of sea level rise and deteriorating sea walls.

Action for the Wild donates technical assistance to support this programme via an offshow area to promote the captive breeding of this species. It also assists with the planting of Hog's fennel plants on which this moth species is completely reliant as its sole larval food plant; a plant species which itself is also threatened.

2021 Conservation Breeding Activities

In 2021, a new purpose-built quarantine facility was built at the entrance to the offshow moth facility to enable our keeping staff to change into PPE before entering into the moth area.

This ensures biosecurity is in place at the facility to prevent the health of the moths from being affected before release.



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2021 Conservation Breeding Activities

In total **66 CATERPILLARS** were placed on their feeding plant, Hog's fennel.

26 HOG'S FENNEL PLANTS were used to feed the caterpillars in 2021.

Our keepers **CHECKED FOR MOTHS** from 5th September until 12th October every other night.

In total, **14 MOTHS** emerged; **3 MALES** and **11 FEMALES**

We had **5 PAIRS**, which produced **18 BATCHES OF EGGS**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Batches of eggs	5	10	5	6	6	4	8
Number of caterpillars emerged	48	60	33	60	62	26	66
Number of caterpillars put on each net / new sites	1 to 2	1 to 3	2	up to 4	1- 4	2-3	1-4
Number of moths emerged	11 (6.5)	15 (9.6)	5 (3.2)	14 (6.8)	12 (7.5)	4 (2.2)	14 (3.11)
Number of pairs formed	8	5	2	6	6	1	5
Number of pairs laid	7	5	1	5	6	1	5
Number of egg batches laid	14	27	3	23	11	3	18

Night Survey:
Evidence of moth mating



Searching for evidence of caterpillar feeding activity



Signs of caterpillar feeding activity (frass)



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



MORE INFORMATION

If you would like further details on the charities supported through Action for the Wild, please visit:

www.actionforthewild.org

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If you would like to know more about becoming an intern on our UmPhafa Nature Reserve in South Africa, please visit:

www.umphafa.org



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To find out more about adopting an animal or our animal experiences, please visit:

www.colchesterzoo.org

