

reports



10th anniversary Swaziland

Comanis's longest-running project! Exactly 10 years ago, working with Back to Africa, we financed the first transport of Roan Antelope to Big Game Parks Swaziland. From this first exploratory step other exciting projects have evolved

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Umqophiso pre school

This is how it all began. Comanis's inaugural project, sponsoring an extension to an existing school enabling another 45 kids to attend preschool and be taught by some amazing teachers

CKGR Research

working with the talented crew of the CKGR Research group, we are focusing on wildlife research & providing higher education opportunities in wildlife conservation to Botswana students

page 3

Ostrich egg jewelry

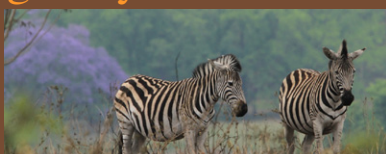
our newest project, developing stable livelihoods for women in the communities of Zutshwa and Ngwatle, Botswana through their beautiful Kalahari jewellery

Kaa Gate research

working with some passionate conservationists, our first research project seeks innovative conservation solutions of a gorgeous and intact wilderness area, Botswana's southern Kalahari

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gallery



Comanis visit in November 2011

view a photogallery of our projects, visiting Big Game Parks in Swaziland, capturing (or attempting to capture) vultures in Tsau Hills with CKGR Research, and conducting workshops and bushwalks with the Basarwa in Zutshwa and Ngwatle, Botswana

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projects overview



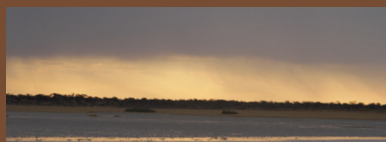
Projects supported by Comanis

review all the current projects Comanis is supporting in Swaziland, South Africa and Botswana...

Please see more on

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outlook



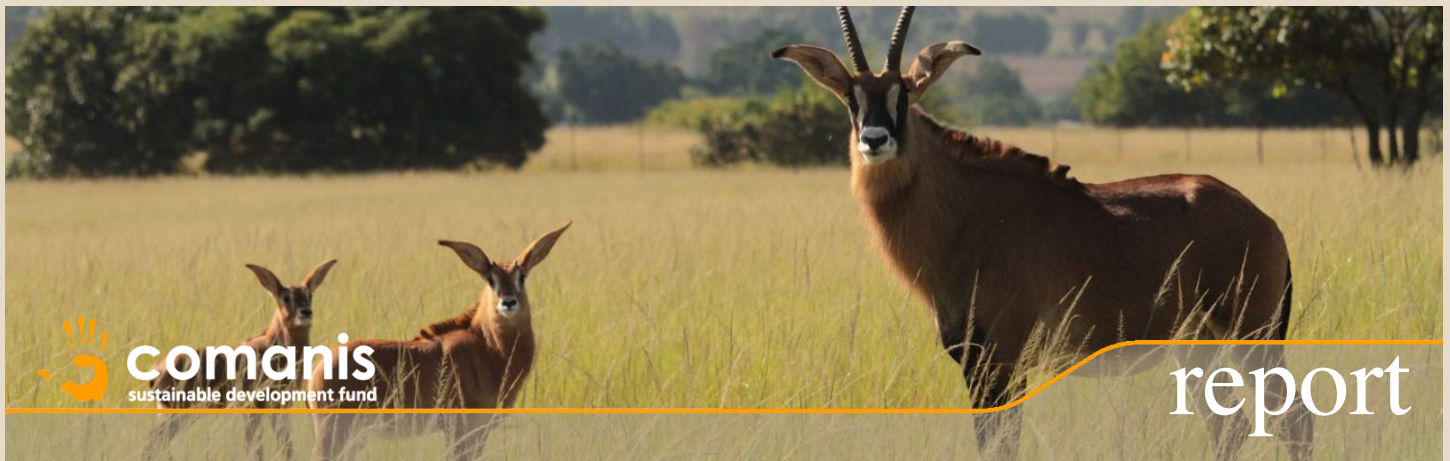
Comanis activities 2012

2012 is going to be an exciting year for Comanis and our partners!

Please see more on

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10 years Swaziland Big Game Parks, Swaziland

supported projects in Swaziland
Part 1



Ted Reilly

Founder and CEO of Big Game Parks Swaziland talks about the small antelope propagation programme, which is one of many different projects Comanis is supporting Big Game Parks Swaziland for the last ten years.

In 2002 Comanis financed one of the transports of Roan Antelopes (with Back to Africa) from the Marwell Zoo England to Miliwane Wildlife Sancturay Swaziland.

www.biggameparks.org

The roan project enabled the beginnings of the long-planned-for rare and threatened small antelope propagation programme as well as the establishment of the Royal Botanic Garden. A total area of 70ha encompassing Miliwane Hill was enclosed with a game-proof fence and an apron of netting to exclude dogs and jackals, though other predators like caracal, leopard, pythons, baboons and eagles remain a constant threat. It had never been quite appreciated just how much of an impact predation actually had on rare and threatened species until we started counting the cost of this in losses of small antelope. One tends to skate over losses of common, high density species, but the value of rare animals and their cost of establishment brought this issue sharply into focus.

The whole 70ha is under intense management to suit the needs of the various species. Mowing and fire are both used to reduce and vary grass length, and to provide a mosaic of different stages of grass growth in order to provide the animals with a greater diversity of choice in the grazing regime. Some people call fire vandalism; others call it pyromania. We simply call our use of fire veld management. Nguni cattle are periodically introduced to lure ticks and lessen the tickload on wildlife. The cattle are then dipped to kill the ticks. Application of Deadline by 'tickoff' machines is also used for tick control. Waterbuck are excellent early indicator species of heavy tickloads and a small herd has been introduced for this purpose. Daily patrols are conducted both internally and along fencelines to keep

abreast of predator presence and fence breaches. Headcounts of the different species are also recorded daily. Oribi inhabit the grasslands and savannah habitats within the 70ha enclosure, but in one camp four mature females were unproductive this season (2011/2012) because of the absence of a mature ram during the mating season (April/May 2011). Another setback the species suffered was heavy predation, as have all other small antelopes, by a caracal and pythons. The caracal could not be caught in a walk-in trap and eventually, after probably killing 8 oribi in 10 days without consuming any of them, it had to be shot. 24 pythons ranging from 1 metre to almost 5 metres have been caught and removed live from the 70ha. 6 oribi, 2 suni, 1 blue duiker and 1 vaal rhebuck were forcibly regurgitated from the pythons in order to identify what had been eaten. The high density of the python population could easily have been understated, but for the losses they incurred. The lawns at the lodge are often adorned with suni, blue and red duiker which emerge from the thickets, as do tortoises and klipspringer.

Comanis Foundation have helped to establish suni, vaal rhebuck, blue duiker and has sponsored essential fencing costs. Comanis paid for both a sable bull and red hartebeest bull to diversify the genetics of these two species in Swaziland, but the sable was unfortunately struck by lightning before it passes on its genes.



Suni (*Neotragus moschatus*) is a very small species of antelope. It occurs in south-east Africa in dense underbrush.

Suni are around 30-43 cm high at the shoulder and weigh 4-4.5kg. They are usually reddish brown, darker on their back than their sides and legs. The belly, chin, throat and insides of legs are white. The nostrils are prominent red, and there are black rings around the eyes and above the hooves. Males have horns 8-13 cm long, that are ridged most of their length and curve backwards close to their heads. Females do not have horns. Suni can make weak barking and whistling sounds.

Suni feed on leaves, fungi, fruits and flowers, and need almost no free water. They are shy, most active at night, and sleep during the day in a shady, sheltered area. They are social but males defend a territory of about 3 hectares. They scent-mark the boundaries with secretions from their preorbital glands. There may be an individual or communal dung pile on the periphery of the territory.

Umqophiso pre school

Luandle Township, South Africa



(Victoria) Nomaweza Manggwengwe

Head of Umqophiso Pre School and nominee for the National teacher award.

http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/comms/press/2011/69_28oct.html

We have entered a National teacher Award, Helene as a School Governing Body member had to nominate us, we have passed as Top Achievers in the Category Excellence in Grade R Teaching, that was the first step which was for the District Awards. Our districts consist of 16 Schools from Metro East and 15 schools from Metro South, and the second step which is Provincial Award, we are now Provincial nominees. We have entered as a team of the School. We are only three teachers who entered, because they want people who are registered with South African Council of Educators, (SACE) and so the three of us are registered. Provincial Panel was here at our School for interviews and to see the School. It was a day I will never forget in my life, was a special day and day of recognition in what we are doing.

Provincial Panel arrives exactly at 08H30 in the morning. They were nine delegates.

They wanted to talk to somebody on behalf of the school who will tell them about me in general, and what we are doing, since I'm the nominee. Secondly they call the three of us (Victoria, Somie, Nomvume) for interview. There were sixteen questions, two for each Adjudicator. After that we went to do the teaching in the classroom. They were so impressed with what we doing and they told us that they can see that it is not just a show case, its something we do everyday because they see the response of learners and how happy they are, and also the layout of classrooms is excellent compared to other schools especially Public Schools. On the 28th October 2011 at a Gala Function we were so shocked to find out that we are the Provincial winners.

We are now going to represent the Province of the Western Cape in Nationals, our interview date is 26 & 27 January 2012 in Gauteng Province.



the school of miracle

This was our first Comanis sponsored project in 2001, where we financed a third wing to the existing school. With these two additional classrooms and ablution block the school could take another 45 children from the Luandle Township into their education programme. Victoria who is the most dedicated person in helping young children, has founded this school with her own earnings and has built it up with help from different sponsors to what it is now. The school is named „The School of miracles“ in Lwandle.

CKGR research group

Central Kalahari, Botswana



Glyn Maude

Head of CKGR Research and the main coordinator of Botswana students who are doing their Master or PHD.

<http://www.comanis.ch/people-involved/glyn-maude>

Every year roughly 30 students graduate in biology or environmental studies from the University of Botswana and yet there is little opportunity for them to go onto working with wildlife, even though Botswana has an abundance of it.

As a research group we believe in giving young qualified people from Botswana the opportunity to increase the overall knowledge-base on the wildlife that lives in their country. We do this through providing the funds, resources, expertise and training required for biology graduates from the University of Botswana to do their own field based M.sc or PhD courses with us.

In order to achieve or capacity development aim we require many different resources. One of these is funds to go towards the academic costs of doing an M.Sc or PhD. The educational side costs per student are US \$ 15 000 for each year and M.Sc's courses will take approximately

two and a half years to three years to complete. The \$ 15? 000 included university fees and other associated costs, a student monthly stipend, a lap-top and a one off payment to help students move from their homes to be based in Maun.

There will be 6 months of initial training, one and a half years of field based data collection and 9 to 12 months for the thesis write up time. Further funds are also required for the actual field based costs for each student that are not included in the above amount.

At present the research group is trying to fund raise for existing studies on lions, wild dog, lappet-faced and white headed vultures and wildebeest with Mtswana students.



local researcher sponsoring

Comanis is supporting several research projects under the umbrella of CKGR research, and specifically supports the above mentioned initiative for Batswana students to get the possibility of their MSc or PhD financed. We believe that assisting inspired, self-motivated Batswana graduates with opportunities to advance their chosen field of study is a very important step towards the future of wildlife education and conservation in this country.

Ostrich egg jewelry

Zutshwa, Botswana



Ompatile Lekgowe

local project coordinator and the main driving force for the workshops held by Comanis for the women in Zutshwa and Ngwatle.

My name is Ompatile. I am proud of my Basarwa (San) heritage. Working with Comanis I am seeing that we now have a future in Zutshwa.

Comanis helped me to start my tuck shop where I sell all foodstuffs and other things that people need. The prices are for the poor families, and everything is cheaper than anywhere else. People have bought everything and the shop is empty after Christmas!

More especially, Comanis has made me in charge of the Ostrich eggshell Jewelry. They brought all things that are difficult for us to get in Zutshwa: these are broken ostrich eggshells, fisheries [string], needles and others like hand-drills and grinding stones. I give these things to the women and tell them the order from Comanis. I also make sure that they are doing things properly with quality, because some of the people can be lazy nowadays.

When Comanis comes to Zutshwa, we go together to see the women and buy their jewellery. Then Comanis takes the jewellery and is finding places to sell them in Botswana and overseas.

Comanis also gave us a big tent so we can have workshops together. We are going to learn about better ways to make the jewellery and so everybody knows how to do things properly. It will be good if some of the best women like Tamkase make the nicest jewellery. Then the others can learn how to make better beads, because that takes the longest time. The women are now saying they are so very happy because they know that they can survive in this way.

I will try by all means to help whatever Comanis wants to do in Zutshwa, because I can see now that we will no longer be suffering.



new hope

Generating alternative livelihood options is important in the village of Zutshwa, situated in a prime wildlife area adjacent to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, because lack of alternatives determines the impact people have on their surrounding environment. The future of this wilderness area is important to landscape connectivity and sustaining free-ranging wildlife in the larger southern Kalahari ecosystem. Comanis plans to increase its conservation efforts here and there are further exciting projects in the works!

Kaa Gate research

Kaa Gate, Botswana



Derek Keeping

PhD student and Comanis Trustee leading Kaa gate research and passionate conservationist. His main focus is identifying problems and finding solutions to conservation of the magnificent wilderness areas around Kaa gate.

The Kaa Gate Research Project is about tracking. It's about a cultural practice that has sustained, even shaped humankind over the ages. At a time when we are easily lured to technological solutions to problems often resulting from misapplied technology in the first place, it's about rediscovering simpler time-tested ways of doing things.

Mostly illiterate people with few opportunities are the superstars of this project. Through testing their uncommon and exceptional skills we are learning how tracking can be applied to modern challenges of wildlife conservation.

Comanis is supporting our ongoing experiments in the southern Kalahari. Our work often involves identifying and counting tracks along long sections of sand trails in and around the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. Relating these track counts to independent estimates of animal populations, we are beginning to elucidate rather simple relationships

between animal density and the number of animal tracks that cross a line transect in a 24hr cycle of movement.

Linking these with a better understanding of the factors determining detectability of animals by their tracks, one of our goals is to confidently estimate animal populations by counting tracks instead of counting animals themselves, which of course are difficult to see and invariably result in underestimates, if they are seen at all.

Observing tracks instead of actual animals is an elegantly simple way to capture a comprehensive picture of the species inhabiting an area, including cryptic and elusive wildlife rarely observed. Tracks are giving us an in-depth look at the spatial distribution and abundance of the Kalahari wildlife community. We can see how close species venture towards villages, and at what proximity their abundances change.



protecting one of the most intact wilderness

Kaa gate research occurs in a conservation sensitive region with an uncertain future. This corner of Botswana is underresearched and desperate for increased knowledge. Understanding the impacts human developments are having on the environment is a necessary starting point to developing effective conservation policy. Comanis supports this research as we strongly believe this area deserves critical attention as one of the most intact wilderness areas remaining in Africa.

Travel journal



Corinne Itten, President

1st row:

Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary

Roan antelope herd is getting good in numbers and need urgently some more space to move to. Mlilwane North development should be the next priority. In Memory Sam Dlamini the best Ranger in the world



2nd row:

Mkhaya Game Reserve

Rhino enjoying mud bath after heavy rain!



3rd row:

CKGR Research

Trying to capture some vultures at Tsau Hill with Denver Zoo Team and meeting with the research team in Maun



4th row:

Zutshwa/Ngwatle

The beautiful ostrich egg jewelry



5th row:

Zutshwa/Ngwatle

Several workshops with women who are doing ostrich egg jewelry in order to get an idea of what their skills are and work with them.

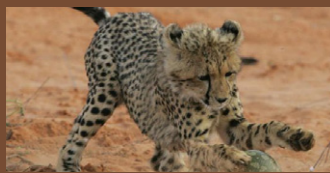
6th row:

Zutshwa/Ngwatle

Experienced great days with bushmen in their traditional „hunting“ areas and looking for all the sipwells they used to live on.



Supported projects



Nature conservation

Big Game Parks Swaziland

- Roan Antelope project (together with Back to Africa)
- Endangered small antelopes
- Support in different needed infrastructure projects (fencing, land purchase)
- Mlilwane North development (fencing northern part of Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary)
- Vets on Wheel - sterilization of domestic dogs in areas close to National parks
- Cheetah Conservation Botswana - financial support for upgrading educational center

Community

Comanis is involved to establish various upliftment projects (like the ostrich egg jewelry) in the area of KD1 and KD2 with the people from Zutshwa and Ngwatle.

Research

Kaa Gate Research, Botswana

- Derek Keeping sponsored by Comanis Foundation and KCL Link

CKGR Research, Botswana

- Moses Selebatso, Wildebeest Ecology Researcher together with Save Foundation
- Keitumetse Ngaka, Boteti Lion Research
- Kevin MacFarlane, CKGR Lion Research
- Botilo Tshimologo, CKGR Wild Dog Research
- Kristina Kesch, Makgadikgadi Fence & Lion Research
- Vyiana Leo, Makgadikgadi Brown Hyaena Research
- Gus Mills, Kgalagadi Cheetah project South Africa
- CJ Havenmann, Roan Research project Wilderness Safaris, Botswana

Agenda 2012



Middelpos2Molopo
Karoo2Kalahari
Cycle Safari 2012
Information Package



Comanis has nominated Derek Keeping as a new trustee to the board of the Foundation.

2012 is shaping up to be a more exciting year than ever. As Comanis continues supporting the many projects outlined above, we continue to look for new worthwhile initiatives to become involved in during our travels on the ground in Africa. In March we'll be supporting and actively participating in a „Mega“-spoor transect covering most of the border and interior of Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR). A collaborative research event initiated by Glyn Maude, it brings together the Wildlife department, NGOs, and researchers throughout Botswana to assess large predator, specifically wild dog, presence and abundances in the region. Through the Kaa gate research, and our growing relationship with remote area communities in the southern Kalahari, Comanis will be selecting, recruiting, and employing the trackers required for the Mega-spoor transect.

Another exciting event we'll be participating in is the Middelpos to Molopo cycle challenge – a conservation fundraiser organized by Kanabo Conservation Link. 50% of the earnings of the Comanis team will go directly to Zutshwa for upliftment purposes the community decides upon together. We've recently sponsored 4 new bicycles for Zutshwa and there is already great demand by motivated individuals to begin training for the event! The two strongest riders from the community will join the „Comanis Bushriders“ team and be riding across South Africa in October for their home village.

Special thanks to:

Gauer Itten Messerli Architects, Alta Vista, Ju52 projects & visions, Derek Keeping, Kit & Wilga du Plessis, Hamish & Alison Currie, George de Beer, Tom Goddard, Chris Woolcott, Peter Leuenberger, Julia Burger, Michéle Müller Itten, Antje Hellwig, Francesca Bigger, Marisa Calzavera for helping with various support/donations for Comanis