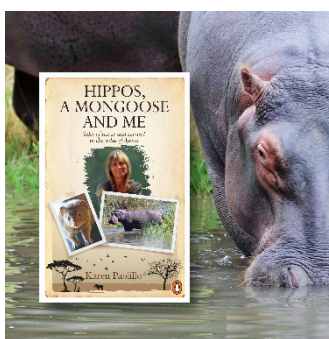


LATEST NEWS FROM TURGWE HIPPO TRUST. April 2024

The last couple of months have been full of real highs and sadly terrible lows and as is my nature I am trying to focus on the positive rather than the negatives and look for hope in all that we do here.

The publication of my book by Penguin Random House alongside Struik Nature in South Africa has brought rave reviews with many very nice comments from those that have read HIPPOS, A MONGOOSE AND ME. This is my second book and it has 21 chapters about some of the amazing animals as well as of course the hippos who I have had the privilege of sharing my life with, for the last 3 decades. It is a book that you can read a chapter then put it down and read another one later, which I believe in our fast moving lives is the best way these days to write. You can purchase the hard copy <https://www.savethehippos.info/product/hippos-mongoose-and-me/> or in June at any amazon and eBooks are available on other online sites as well.



After the book launch with one of the Turgwe Hippo Trust's new Patrons, the lovely actor Peter Egan from Downton Abbey, True Love and many other TV and Movies

having him introduce me on line and being part of the entire program, I felt so honored to have Peter join the Turgwe Hippo Trust as a Patron.



Peter Egan

He joined us alongside actors Dan Richardson and Mark Bonnar. Mark has recently been seen in the new movie Napoleon. The book launch and subsequent radio interviews were very rewarding and brought new supporters to the Turgwe Hippo Trust, which is sorely needed this year.

We are in a drought year and here at the end of April the grazing is so limited we could be already in September looking at how the veld looks. We are busily building a storage shed for some of the hay that will arrive on May 11th.



Builder Edson

This is thanks to donations from some of the Turgwe Hippo Supporters, who have helped to buy the very first month of food for the hippos and build this shed. The hippos eat hay, survival ration made up mainly of cotton seed, and horse cubes. I will be feeding 26 hippos and probably around 300 other wild animals. We do now need more donations to come in so that we can continue feeding in June and I will have to feed from May through to December so any donation at all will all mount up and help to keep not just the hippos but all the animals that will feed alongside them healthy and alive. We put out a tiny bit of food for the film crew to film to get an idea for the program and Relief and her new calf Oliver immediately came in.



Relief and new calf Oliver

Then on April 16th a film crew from Canada Quebec, Blimp TV, arrived to film. The main star of the show is a fabulous lady called Claudia Gilbert who is a qualified vet in Canada. The program has been running for a season of 12 episodes already, and we are number 11 in their second season. Kim Wolhuter, my friend who works with hyenas, will be the 12th and the last episode of the second season. The program is based around people having a bond, or bonds, with wild animals, and although it is in French it will show you THT, the hippos as well as myself and Jean-Roger. Claudia is one of the best TV presentators I have ever had the privilege of working with; she has soul, heart and beauty and I so enjoyed her company and all of the crew. Louis, the Director was so organized and professional, Guillaume the cameraman was the kindest man I have ever met in my entire life, and Pierre the sound man was a musician and man so organized and very rock star in his outlooks and abilities. All of them were fun, and yet very professional and the five days rushed by in a blur and I just hope that the production company will be as pleased with the end result as Louis and all of them were.



Back row l to r Jean-Roger, rangers: Tapera, Peter, Farai, Elijah and Alphonse, and Pierre the sound man.

Bottom row: Director Louis, Guillaume camera, Silas, Claudia Gilbert and Karen

Straight after their visit we rushed up to Harare (7 hour drive) to meet my friend Suzanne Tory and her wonderful husband Stuart Smith. Suzanne used to be one of the Directors of Friends of Turgwe Hippo Trust Canada until we closed down there and moved to the USA. They come out every year for a safari in Zimbabwe and it is always such a pleasure to see them, even if only for one night.

Then we returned home and that is where the real disaster awaited us. I was informed by one of the Trust's six rangers that a young sub-adult hippo had been shot, some 12 kilometers away, at the boundary of the area where it borders the Community lands. The hippo was shot under the auspice of PAC, Problem Animal Control, as the hippo had allegedly attacked a villager in the community who was in hospital as a result of this attack. The sport hunting safari set-up which owns the land across the Turgwe River and have been responsible in the past for shooting other Turgwe Hippos, were called by National Parks to shoot this young hippo.

The unbelievable thing was that nobody told us, as apparently they had known that the hippo was causing problems a week previously, but he had then not attacked anyone. When he did they immediately went to the area and shot a hippo. The thing is that there are 3 hippos in that area and the attack was not all that it was made out to be. I have had photos and video of the dead hippo given to me, as well as reports from people living there. The man who was attacked found a hippo in his lands and shouted at it to chase it out. (You cannot shout at a large mammal like an elephant, buffalo, hippo or any

such animal and expect the animal to respond like a dog or cow.) Apparently the man ran at the hippo brandishing a stick and probably rocks and began harassing the animal, which of course then defended itself by attacking the man. He has been bitten, but according to the informers he will survive, but a hippo did not. Whether of the 3 hippos it was the right hippo that was shot, I will never know, but what I do know is that we could have intervened. I could have asked all of you to help with capture and translocation on the financial level, and arranged for a capture team to come in and hopefully we would have caught not just that hippo, but all 3 and moved them to a safer area away from a community boundary. If that had not been possible perhaps we could have looked at putting up a solar panel and single electric wire around that man's land as a hippo will not step over a small electrified fence. Nobody contacted us and I was not aware of what was about to happen to that hippo.

I believe that if it was a male (as seeing the photos it is very hard to be sure) he was a youngster, a sub-adult not more than 5 or 6 years of age. I don't think that that hippo family has ever been part of the families I have studied for the last 33 years, as they have been up in that area for many years. I have had reports over the years about them and they have not harassed or caused any problems until this year. I believe the hippo would never have hurt the man if he had not chased it and been aggressive towards the animal.

This year is a drought year and all the animals are going to get hungrier and hungrier and there are no crops as such in the communal lands as they have all failed.

The biggest problem with the wildlife world is that many of the people involved in it do it on an egotistical basis or as a business to finance their own lifestyles. The Turgwe Hippo Trust is totally a not for profit. I have never received any salary and as the hunters love to say to me I do it because I love the hippos. They find this amusing. On my side I believe that any passion with total determination and focus can only come from love never from greed.

I am not going to show you photos of the dead hippo as it will only upset you all, as it does me. Just know that we will always need your help to combat this kind of tragedy. I will never give up doing my upmost best for the protection and future of all Turgwe River hippos.

So although I end this blog on a heart-breaking and soul-destroying note, I will not give up. I am now looking at the future for those other two hippos and if I can arrange a safe place for them and get them captured I will once again have to ask you all for financial help. For now we need help with the food and transport for the drought but I will keep you informed on the future of these two remaining hippos in that area.

With love to you all, and thanks to you for helping the Turgwe Hippo Trust.

You can make a donation here at

<https://www.savethehippos.info/donate-to-help/>

We salute you all. Karen and the hippo's xxx