

## Message from the President

In our inaugural year, CLAWS has outpaced all of our expectations! Pride in Our Prides, our flagship lion conservation program, has undergone tremendous growth. We have not seen a single case of poisoning since we began our community engagement. Lion mortality has been substantially reduced and many members of the community appreciate our warnings when collared lions approach their village. We highlight some of our best program achievements on page 2. Through Leopards Without Borders, we coordinated an international team of experts that lead to an increase in the conservation status of leopards by the World Conservation Union (IUCN)'s Red List of Threatened Species. Our contributions were covered in [National Geographic Magazine](#), [the New York Times](#) and [Africa Geographic Magazine](#). Our Wolves Wild Program has shown promise as we continue to develop a coalition of stakeholders and potential donors. Beyond our field work, we held our first fundraising dinner in May called Show Your CLAWS. Along with a spectacular dinner, we raised \$5,500 and had a thrilling round of trivia, raffle and gave an update on our field programs.

A big thank you to National Geographic's Big Cat Initiative for their continued support into this year. Additionally, we have received grants from INNO fund from WWF Netherlands, SPOTS Foundation under the tireless direction of Simone Eckhardt, Experiment.com and our private donors- many of whom have been following our journey closely!

I could not be more proud of our team. We are pushing the leading edge of community engagement in conservation work and I am truly excited about the developments we are planning for 2017.

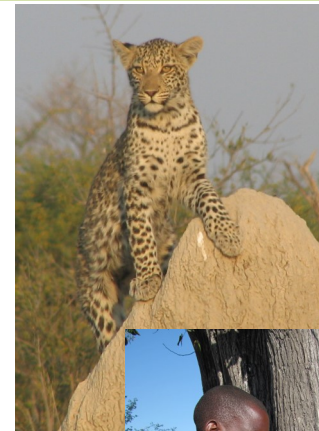
Stay sharp!

Andrew Stein, PhD, Founder of CLAWS Conservancy



*"We are pushing the leading edge of community engagement in conservation..."*

• *Andrew Stein  
President, CLAWS*



Lion Populations in our area are growing

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PiOP team: Eric LeFlore, DWNP collaborator, Mathata "Pro" Tomeletso, and Dr. Florian "Flo" Weise

## Pride in Our Prides



Our flagship program is going strong. In 2016, we did not record a single human-caused lion mortality. While poison use is still prevalent in other regions of Botswana (2 known cases in July/ August), we have seen no evidence of poison use in our area since the inception of Pride in Our Prides (PiOP). Lion mortality was reduced from 60% in 2013 to 17% in 2015 to 0 in 2016. We are excited about the progress that we have made in protecting villagers and lions.

Lion prides still show signs of disturbance with new males arriving in our area occasionally to take over prides. However, the local lion population currently seems to be showing signs of growth with

Maleherehere ("sneaky one") now denning. Mayenga ("decorated by the gods") and her primate successfully raised 2 females to adulthood, thereby doubling the size of their pride! Both Mayenga and her primate were seen mating with an unknown male during the summer months, so we are expecting two new litters in late November. Mutlawankanda ("the forager") and Nduraghumbo ("head of the homestead") have joined forces and have been moving around together for several months. Recently, we recorded the presence of a previously unknown female with cubs in our area and we hope to learn more about her in the coming year. To help us convey the stories of these animals to the community, we are working with National Geographic's CritterCam film crew. During our December collaring effort we will secure CritterCam's to the lions that will record up to 18 hours of video. Footage will then be edited and presented to our partner communities to strengthen their connection to the local prides. We also hope to get an intimate look at the new cubs!



## Early Warning System

A warning text comes in at 11:30 pm, the PiOP team jumps from their beds to determine the location of the lion on Google Earth before informing the village chief and elders that Nduraghumbo is approaching!

We use the names that villagers have given the lions to strengthen the connection and understanding that all lions are individuals and not all are bad. From here, a flurry of text messages are sent across the village to alert people to secure their livestock before potentially problematic predators are in striking distance.



This early-warning system is the foundation of our successful outreach programs. Thus far, we have sent out dozens of warnings this year, mitigating untold numbers of livestock conflicts. Our feedback has been strong with members of the community, stating enthusiastically that they appreciate receiving text messages when individual lions are approaching the village. They even refer to the lions by their given names as they prepare to protect their livestock. One afternoon in July, we met the chief of Jungwe village who was using his cattle to drag a large felled tree to his homestead. When we asked what he planned to use the log for he said, "Because Nduraghumbo is coming! I need wood to build a fire to scare him away from my cattle."

We are looking to build upon our early successes by putting trackers on cattle that can calculate distances from our collared lions and streamlining the warning message system through automation- allowing our team to offer support instead of managing the warning system.



Pro discussing Kraal construction with the owners

## Lion- Proof, Livestock Enclosures (Kraals)

Flo was standing by the vehicle in Gudigwa when an old man grabbed him by the hand. At first Flo was surprised, but as the friendly elder motioned for Flo to follow, he did dutifully. When they arrived at the elder's homestead, Flo found a giant lion-proof livestock enclosure (kraal) in our program design- but bigger! Through our program community liaison Pro, Flo asked who helped him, the old man replied nobody. In a matter of a couple months, this man had chopped branches, dragged them to his home and built a strong enclosure. He had seen our kraal design and built one for himself. The elder said that he tells the boys in the village that if he can do it, so can they. Our team was in shock!

"Let's make a deal, we will build a lion-proof enclosure to your needs, but with your help". That's how it started. Until July 2016, we had built smaller enclosures to maximize our resources. When we arrived in Moyegogo, we realized that a smaller enclosure was not going to be helpful to our newest partner. He was an older gentleman with a large herd of livestock well over 100 animals, though he did not even know the number. After some negotiating, we agreed to build his enclosure measuring twice the size of our previous ones, only if he agreed to provide help every day. True to his word, our team met him nearly every single day for 6 weeks while we constructed the largest enclosure yet. This partnership is what we are aiming for! Since the launch of PiOP, we have built 11 enclosures. There have been no livestock losses in any of these enclosures and with new partnerships with livestock owners, we are training people directly how to build and maintain their own. Beyond our own enclosures, two community members have independently taken our design and with slight modifications created their own. As we adapt our approach and receive greater community participation, we hope to build bigger and better!

## Return of the Herder

Outside of the village, away from the safety of the kraals, unattended livestock are still getting killed by predators. Historically, when pastoralism was the dominant lifestyle, people walked with their herds and kept them safe from harm. As communities become more sedentary and the young boys go to school, herding has become a position of low status. Most herders are not paid or paid such low wages that they are not motivated enough to do more than release livestock from the kraals in the morning and occasionally retrieve them in the evening (if they haven't returned on their own). Thus far, dozens of cattle have been confirmed killed by predators in 2016 in our study area. These conflicts are the source of crippling losses to local families and retribution against regional predators.

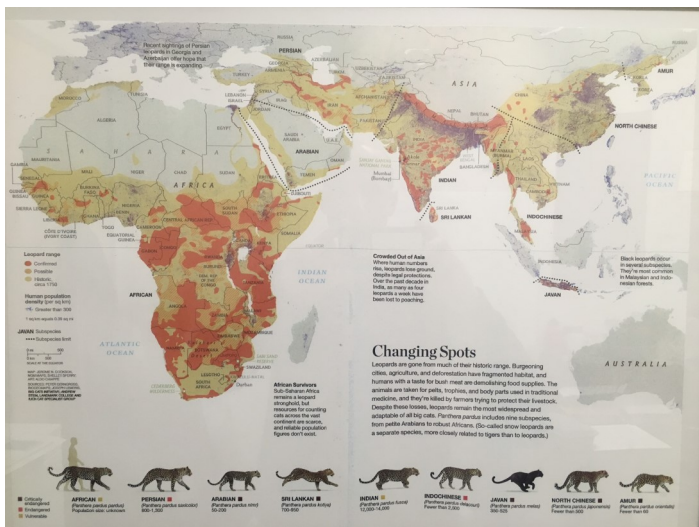


PiOP received a grant from National Geographic's Big Cat Initiative to develop a herder training program for herders who receive a minimal salary to 1) learn the finer points of livestock management and husbandry and 2) learn from other herders about rangeland management and take pride in their traditional knowledge that predates the current dysfunctional system. Once the course is complete, herders will receive certification and have the opportunity to receive monthly awards for excellence in herding. This program aims to return the herder to a position of high status within the community as the protector of their livelihoods.

## Leopards Without Borders

If 2015 was the year of the lion, 2016 was the year of the leopard! In May, Dr. Stein, was among a team of scientists that published a landmark paper on the drastic decline in leopard range across sub-Saharan Africa and throughout Asia. Before this analysis, leopards were assumed to be doing fine. With tiger populations struggling and lions in free-fall, most people assumed that the secretive and adaptable leopard was still in strong, however, our study showed that leopards have lost up to 75% of their historic range. Many of the experts were called to give statements about the current status of leopards and Dr. Stein provided context in articles within the New York Times and Africa Geographic magazine. In July, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) released its Red List update for leopards. With Dr. Stein as lead assessor, the report stated that leopard should be reclassified as Vulnerable, a step closer to Endangered, with several subpopulations retaining Endangered or Critically Endangered status. This controversial shift in status has had rippling effects throughout range states and countries that regulate the imports of trophy products such as skins.

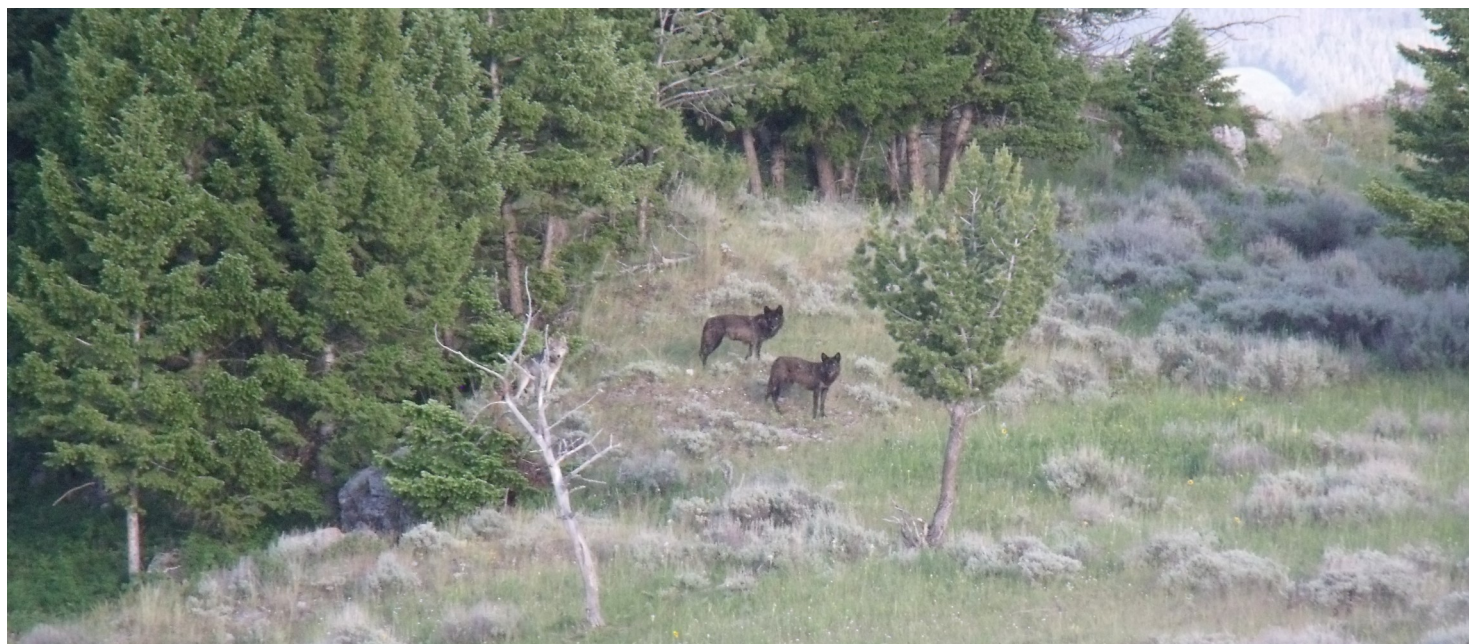
With workshops planned for 2017, CLAWS is in position to help support regional research projects, direct national management plans or help craft international policy regarding leopard conservation and management!



The leopard distribution map published in National Geographic Magazine December 2015 (p. 130-131)



## Wolves Wild



In 2016, our wolf program is nearly ready for launch. We spent much of the year building teams of collaborators that can help inform our program and assist us in identifying the most efficient approach to the program. With a few false starts due to funding and exceptional politics, we plan to make greater strides with our scent marking initiative in 2017. We are working on exciting developments in the near future, so stay tuned.



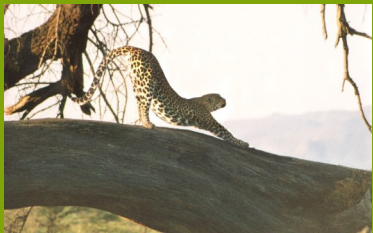
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[DONATE HERE](#)

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### Project News



## Show your CLAWS Fundraiser

During the first week of May, CLAWS Conservancy held a “Seeing Spots Campaign” to raise awareness and support for our big cat projects. The campaign challenged people to keep track of how often they came across Cat Print items during the day, and realize that these patterns are inspired by species currently under threat across the globe. Game participants could gather sponsorships and choose to donate each time they spotted Cat Print. Whoever donated the most would be given the opportunity to join the CLAWS team for 10 days at our field site in Northern Botswana. The game period led up to our first annual “Show Your CLAWS” fundraiser and trivia night at Nuestras Raices in Holyoke, Massachusetts. The event was kick-started by Dr. Andrew Stein, CLAWS President, with a talk on his recent work featured in National Geographic, followed by an interactive game of trivia hosted by Ian Goldstein. We had 7 teams with names like, “CLAWStrophobic,” “The Lion Cheetahs,” and “BattaLION,” join in on the friendly competition, answering a wide range of questions relating to our study species – lions, leopards, and wolves. Dinner was prepared by award winning Chef Neftali Duran (pictured above), who served up a phenomenal 4-course meal using locally grown and freshly picked ingredients from the Nuestras Raices indoor garden. We wrapped up the evening by announcing the winner of the “Seeing Spots Campaign” and giving away a number of raffle items, including Red Sox tickets, a Cape Cod Whale Watch and Dinner at Land Ho! Restaurant, Tango lessons with Corin Lee Girard, private sessions for yoga with Meredyth Klotz and, pole dancing from Barre and Pole, a pottery night in ESB Pottery, framed wildlife photos taken by Dr. Stein, and lion sponsorship from our lion program. Approximately \$5,500 was successfully raised towards our various conservation initiatives. We thank all of the volunteers who helped behind the scenes, especially Rocky Casillas, Keith Whitfield, Yalin Geiger, Avanti Mukherjee, Patricia Squitiero, David Woodsome, Andrew Abreu, Elena Shih and the Stein family.



## Thank you for your Support!

We run on donations from private donors and the following organizations: [National Geographic's Big Cat Initiative](#), [WWF Netherlands INNO](#), [SPOTS Foundation](#), [Experiment.com](#). Most Appreciated!

