



UMOJI

Welcome to the first edition of the newly reinstated Manda Wilderness 'UMOJI' newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading our little updates and anecdotes, and that it will inspire you to book your next visit to Nkwichi Lodge very soon!

Nkwichi Lodge

Well, 2007 has been a busy year for Nkwichi, with our highest number of guests to date and many improvements being made around the lodge.



One such upgrade has been the complete redesign and rebuild of one of our original chalets - **Kuya**. The all new Kuya now has stunning branching trees supporting the magnificent high thatched roof and boasts the only en-suite toilet at Nkwichi!

We have also been busy building two new houses - **Songea House** and **Mokolo House**. These houses each have their own fabulous private locations on the lakeshore set a short distance from the main lodge, and make the perfect private retreat with family or friends. They are both now available to book for 2008.

Leopard Kill: During its construction this year, Songea house had an exciting taste of the growing numbers of wildlife in the vicinity of Nkwichi lodge. During the early hours of one August morning, the night watchmen were startled to witness a **leopard** killing a gazelle in the bathroom of the new house! Luckily, the only casualties in this event were the unfortunate gazelle and a rather scared night watchman...

Sticking to the theme of wildlife, in September, staff and guests at Nkwichi were lucky enough to witness a group of five **cape clawless otters** playing around the rocks by the harbour and main beach for over an hour.

A truly magical sight, which we hope will become much more frequent in the future.



The Farm

The Farm, three years old this September, is flourishing and resembles an emerald oasis in a very hot and dry November. It continues to supply Nkwichi Lodge with daily fresh salads of assorted lettuce, rocket, basil, parsley, coriander, beetroot and radish.



With three years of composting behind us, we have seen a marked improvement in our soils this year, which have produced much larger and healthier crops of carrots, cabbage spinach, leeks and aubergines. The gardens are also looking much more established now with the bananas, plantains, massau, lemon, lime, tangerine and orange trees all producing fruit for the first time.



The farm has also now embarked on two new income generating activities. We have become more artistic with our local clay and, in addition to the fuel-efficient stoves, have now started creating plant pots, statues, urns, vases, teapots, soap dishes etc. We have also begun **paper-making**, recycling office paper waste from Nkwichi and mixing with banana leaves and assorted grasses.

New constructions at the farm include **new shade houses** - raised brick beds, shaded by roofs of bango, which will enable us to grow the popular salad crops during the rains which are usually devastated by insects. We have also built simple, pleasant reed and thatch housing on the hill over-looking the farm, for students, ready for the many training sessions are planned next year with local communities, government staff and NGO staff currently working in Niassa.

Community Projects

Work has been continuing apace on the development projects that Manda Wilderness is working on, in partnership with the communities. The construction of the new **Maternity Clinic**



in Cobue is now nearing completion, and work is currently concentrating on painting the inside and outside walls and making wooden doors and window shutters. We are now busy raising funds for the next stage of the project,

which will be fixtures and furnishings, a water system with solar pump and solar power for lighting etc.

SCHOOLS: The schools, which are under construction in six of the villages in the Manda Wilderness area, have also all moved forward this year. Due to our policy of insisting on community participation in these projects, they never move quite as quickly as we would like, but most are now getting to the stage where we will need to supply furniture - another big fund-raising mission! Some of the work that has been done on the schools this year includes:

- Laying the concrete floor in the classroom at Mala
- Fixing the roof at Mataka School
- Finishing the foundations for the new classroom at Chigoma
- Making doors and window shutters for Mbueca
- Finishing the plastering at Uchessi
- Starting the plastering at Mandambuzi



FOOTBALL: The 2007 Manda Wilderness **Football League** starts this month, with 15 villages plus the Nkwichi team competing. This year's league is supported by past guests of Nkwichi - Anne and Jack, and sponsored by MFI. We will be sure to update you on the results of this exciting and highly competitive tournament in the next newsletter.

Conservation

In 2006 the boundaries for the Manda Wilderness Community Conservation Area (MWCCA) and the land areas for the six communities (15 villages) involved in this project were delimited with the government. This means that the communities now hold the land titles - the certidao - and have the power to decide what happens on their land.

To mark the significance of this accomplishment, in May of this year the Governor of Niassa came to Cobue for a ceremony to present the **Land Title Certificates** to the community leaders. This was a prestigious event, with all of the paramount chiefs dressed in full uniform to receive their certificates.



UMOJI: This year we have been working hard to develop the UMOJI association - which is the association that has been formed to manage the MWCCA

and to represent the 15 villages that are involved. In May we had a 4-day series of workshops in Cobue with all members of Umoji, during which individuals were elected onto positions on the councils. Then in September we went on a trip around each of the 15 villages, with the newly elected members of the directing council of Umoji, and they helped deliver training to the communities.

NEXT STEPS: We are now embarking on the next phase of the project with Umoji, which has been to apply for funding from the Ford Foundation to develop a **Management Plan** for the community conservation area.

Get Involved



The **Manda Wilderness Community Trust**, a registered charity based in the UK, is constantly working hard to raise funds for our community projects. If you are interested to get involved then please do get in contact with them at MWCT@Mandawilderness.org. Small monthly donations by direct debit are one of the easiest and most effective ways to help, but we of course welcome all contributions - from one-off donations to elaborate fund-raising events.

Special thanks this year go to a past guest at Nkwichi - William Garnett - who managed to raise an extremely impressive US\$14,000 through sponsorship for the 'Norfolk Super Hero Challenge'.