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Sunday 10 April - 16 April 2022

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# TOURISM IS BACK



Photo by Innocent Samunzala



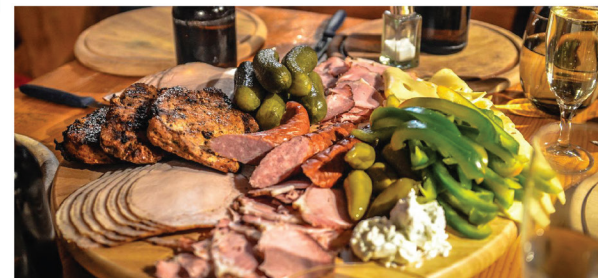
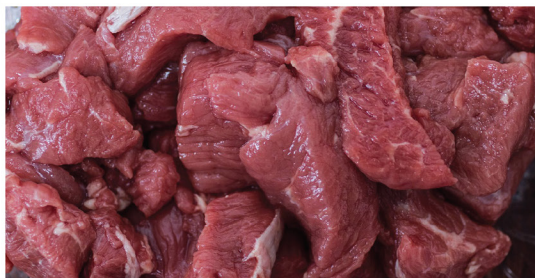
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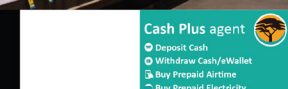
Restaurant



Opening Soon!

(Used to Thapelo Bar, Sedie)

# BERRY LITE



# Tourism recover from Covid

Boniface Keakabetse

The tourism sector seems to be making an emergence from COVID-19 induced coma at the start of the annual Botswana tourism peak season in April this year which will run until September.

Various sources within the tourism sector confirmed to The Okavango Express that tourists have begun to arrive in the country although the volumes are lower than pre-covid era.

Wilderness Safaris Managing Director Kim Nixon told The Okavango Express that as of March 2022, there were positive signs of recovery adding that they are cautiously optimistic for the period ahead, as the world returns to normal and travel becomes a reality again.

Nixon however noted: “The entire tourism sector – up and down the value chain - has been hard hit and this state of affairs still exists today, even as we enter the recovery phase. Occupancies and revenues for Okavango Wilderness Safaris (OWS) in the financial year ended 28 February 2022 were approximately a quarter of what was achieved pre the pandemic. ”



Nixon revealed that OWS has 650 staff under its fold who were affected with wage reductions as a result of pandemic related camp closures. “ However the company maintained and honoured our commitment to pay as much to the staff as was possible. We supported our staff throughout the pandemic and never retrenched or failed to pay our people ” he said.

He explained that 613 staff are back at work, while 64 are still remaining at home on reduced salaries until the situation fully stabilises.

Nixon added that at present, nine camps are open, namely Kings Pool, Duma Tau (including Little Duma Tau), Mombo (including Little Mombo), Baobab, Santawani, Vumbura Plains and Little Vumbura.

Nixon reiterated: “our few remaining camps will be opening as is dictated by traveler demand by July 2022. At this time it is therefore envisaged that all of our staff will be back at work full time by then.”

“We eagerly await the time when we once again have all camps open and fully operational, with all staff back on the job and earning full salaries, so that we can work together as a united team to swiftly rebuild our business” added Nixon

Lesh Moiteela, Representative of lodges sector at Hospitality and Tourism Association of Botswana (HATAB) was equally full of expectation noting that lodges in the Okavango Delta and Chobe are experiencing an improvement in the number of bookings coming in since the beginning of COVID-19.

Moiteela however observed that an emerging trend since the emergence of COVID-19 is that tourists these days confirm bookings a short time before beginning their travel. He said compared to the previous years when bookings were confirmed a year or two in advance it is now difficult to quantify arrival statistics in a short time.

Moiteela is however confident that from May the bookings will improve adding that despite the concerns that Russia – Ukraine War could be a problem so far its impact on travel to Botswana has been minimal.

Chairman of Botswana Guides Association Kenson Kgaga observed that so far the tourism recover will only benefit bigger companies while the smaller ones like the mobile sector will continue to be challenged. He further stated that the increase of park fees by Government will further affect many small business at the time they are just coming from COVID-19 induced hiatus.

“ many mobile businesses are not going to cope. Some will end up closing down because the impact of covid and fees increment is just too much on them to cope.”



# Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community Trust

Email: ng32@btcmail.co.bw  
Tell: 6864806 Fax: 6864809

## Mokoro Price List For 2022

NG 32 Concession entrance fees are as follows:

- \* Boro Gate P 105.00
- \* Xharaxao Gate P 105.00
- \* Morutsa Gate P 105.00
- \* Ditshiping Station P105.00
- \* Daunara Gate P105.00

Per Person

## Polers Fees are as Follows

- \* Head Poler P315
- \* Poler P275

Per Day

## Camping Site Fees

- \* P 105 Per Person a Night

## Mokoro Trip Fees

- \* Trip P105.00 Per Person



Bookings are made at O.K.M.C.T Office Plot 66 Boronyane

# Natural Selection Participates in Wild Dog Conservation Project

Boniface Keakabetse

Eco-Tourism Company, Natural Selection is engaged in a project which aims to prevent the spread of diseases - in particular Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) -between domestic dogs and the Wild Dog population in the Okavango Delta.



The project which involves vaccination of domestic dogs is a collaboration between Natural Selection, Maun Animal Welfare Society and Botswana Predator Conservation Trust.

Dr. Jennifer Lalley, Conservation Director at Natural Selection told The Okavango Express that Natural Selection funded the project but the actual implementation on the ground is done by the Maun Animal Welfare Society (MAWS) and Botswana Predator Conservation Trust (BPCT.)

MAWS is a reputable non-governmental that works to protect Botswana wildlife through domestic animal care offering services such as free veterinary services to low income villagers in remote areas. The Maun based BPCT on the other hand aims to preserve Africa's African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Leopard, Lions and Spotted Hyenas through research and public education.

The organisations commenced the project in November 2021 in the villages of Khwai, Mababe and Sankuyo and Shorobe. The rationale being these are wildlife rich areas where people and wild animals

live side by side therefore increasing the risk of diseases to spread from domestic animals to wildlife. There was a recent illness and death of a Wild Dog near Khwai Village serving as an example of this potential risk.

In total 111 domestic dogs were administered a 5 in 1 vaccination which covers Canine Distemper, Adenovirus, Hepatitis, Parvovirus and Parainfluenza. 109 dogs were vaccinated for Rabies and 3 dogs were sterilized. .

Dr Lalley added: "As Natural Selection we are committed to playing a leading role in the conservation of flora and fauna. We work with other conservation stakeholders to implement various wildlife conservation projects".

According to Dr. Lalley disease management initiatives like this are critical for managing not only the health of village dogs, but are an essential component of protecting Botswana's wildlife, National Parks, and Game Reserves. The vaccination programme creates a "buffer zone" against domestic animal diseases and wild animal populations.

Dr. Lalley reiterated that African Wild Dogs are classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Research information shows that between 3,000 and 5,500 dogs are remaining in 600-1,000 packs, mostly in eastern and southern Africa.

According to the IUCN, one of the contributing factors to the Wild Dogs decline is habitat fragmentation. It has however been noted that one of the primary threats to Wild Dogs is their susceptibility to viral diseases such as CDV. CDV is easily transmitted from domestic dogs to Wild Dogs. Unfortunately, Wild Dogs coming into contact with human settlements and their canine counterparts (domestic dogs) is unavoidable, especially for a wide ranging species in an increasingly fragmented environment. "Therefore it is important for us as Natural Selection being an ecotourism company built on a conservation ethos, to add to the growing urgency to save this iconic species from extinction", she concluded.

## In remembrance of Conservation Icon Veronica Roodt

Boniface keakabetse

Originally from South Africa, Veronica Roodt had spent 34 years in Botswana's Moremi Game Reserve engaged in nature conservation.

The South African researcher and artist passed away in her camp in Moremi Game Reserve on 21 February 2022. She was found sitting in her arm chair, on her deck overlooking the Okavango Delta, the place that she loved and spent 34 years of her life researching and mapping.



Veronica was a pioneer in the development of the Botswana tourism industry. Many years of research, experience and integration with local tribes and communities, resulted in the publication of a wide variety of literature, maps and guide books on all the national parks of Botswana, Tanzania and the Kruger National Park in South Africa.

Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National parks and tourism operators on March 10 organized a memorial service to celebrate the life of Veronica. The event was held at Sedie Lodge in Maun.

Veronica's sister Shelly Roodt was among the speakers who heaped accolades on the 'legend'.

'My sister was not an ordinary person. She could never live an ordinary life' adding that Veronica's love for the pristine Botswana environment attracted her to Botswana such that no amount of persuading to return back home by her family in South Africa could work.

'she was a very talented piano player and would spend many hours in the wilderness playing complicated pieces on her piano. She was also known for artworks widely sold at exhibitions in Botswana and South Africa' Shelly said.

'she was a pioneer of Africa, a legend. Veronica liked nothing else than living among Mophane trees in the Moremi Game Reserve. She continued to live in the same camp among the Mophane trees for 34 years until her untimely death at the age of 65.' Walter Smith representative of Desert & Delta's Camp Moremi described Roodt as a conservation legend and a trainer. 'As Camp Moremi we have been neighbours with Veronica for the past 35 years. She never shied away from sharing knowledge of her research and imparting conservation skills with us at Camp Moremi.'

Moremi Game Reserve park manager Pelotsweu Galebotswe said Veronica was committed for the wellbeing of park and was instrumental in advocating for establishments of a new park routes to relieve congestion on existing routes, a project that she died when it was just about to start.

Further afield, South African based Struik Nature Club in their tribute to Veronica wrote: 'Veronica will be missed but her passion for the wild, her creativity and her indomitable spirit will live on in her many books on Africa's flora and fauna.'

Veronica first career was as a mathematics teacher in Johannesburg which she left to become a tour guide in South Africa's Kruger National Park.

She completed her BSc degree in Botany and Zoology and post-graduate study in large herbivores based in Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana. Since her studies required maps and reference books which were not available at the time she then started a career producing maps and guide books which she wrote, illustrated and published.

Then, she left Botswana in 2004 to Tanzania where she published travel books for the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Crater and maps for all the Tanzanian northern parks. Returning to Botswana in 2010 she continued her call cataloguing, and documenting flora and fauna for all the Botswana parks.

## Botswana's Imported Rhino Poaching Crises

Okavango Delta communities have described the recent rhino poaching surge in the area as an imported problem they were never consulted about.

Luke Motlaleselo (40) is the representative of the Okavango Delta settlements at the local North West District Council. As a boy, the politician was raised in Ditshiping settlement located in a wildlife management area 66 kilometers North East of Maun.

Motlaleselo's political ward comprise of ungazetted settlements of Quxao, Ditshiping, Xaxaba and Daunara in the Okavango Delta. According to Motlaleselo scores of the residents in these settlements recently found themselves at the center of hostilities committed by anti-poaching security agents.



'When Government of Botswana and leading Safari Companies around 2013 introduced the Rhino in to the Delta from South Africa from 2010 our people were not consulted. We just saw big Lorries ferrying rhinos in to NG 32, a tourism concession which some of the settlements are located.'

Motlaleselo charged: 'that was their first mistake. Government should have known that in importing the rhinos they are also importing the poaching burden. That the poachers will soon follow these rhinos here. The best thing was to consult and partner with us the communities. I hope they learnt a lesson that communities do not fake conservation. We are living it. We have lived with these animals since eternity. But alas, that did not happen. Instead they viewed us as poachers.'

Motlaleselo further claimed that the rhino relocation was motivated by tourism more than conservation. ' "

Botswana was more concerned about the publicity and marketing urge with the story of rhino relocation from South Africa to Botswana. The country was projected to be a safe haven where no poacher could dare come. But there was little preparation and engagement of communities where the rhinos were brought.”

Motlaleselelo added that he has sought explanation from authorities and was told that Rhino poaching is a classified issue hence they will not offer explanations. Director of Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) Dr. Kabelo Senyatso told The Okavango Express that issues of rhino poaching are classified operational issues which could not be shared with public or the media. “ we are not going to be apologetic. These are issues of operation. That decision was taken owing to the gravity of the problem we were dealing with.”

Dr. Senyatso said in future they will engage and work with the communities. “ consultation has always been the cradle of Botswana’s democracy. As a country we have always consulted and partnered with our communities for natural resources conservation and we will continue doing that.

Dr. Senyatso further stated that Botswana is formulating a poaching strategy which will enable the country to fight poaching more efficiently. He added that the strategy will be implemented by law enforcement agencies involved in anti-poaching being Botswana Police Service, DWNP, Directorate of Intelligence Services and Botswana Defense Force. “ As the Environment ministry we have made our contributions to the strategy. We are waiting for the other agencies to make theirs and hopefully the strategy will begin to be implemented midyear.”

## **‘Sisboy’ the Rhino orphan named after President Masisi safe at Khama Rhino Sanctuary**

Boniface Keakabetse

Black Rhinoceros calf ‘Sisboy’ named after Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi, was just 26 months when his mother was killed by poachers in the Okavango Delta.



Rhino poaching in Botswana’s Okavango Delta worsened since 2019 with reports of almost a hundred rhinos having been killed by poachers despite Government dismissing the figure. It is understood that the delta had a total 300 rhinos, with the poaching increase forcing Government to translocate remaining Rhinos to a safer guarded facility.

Sisboy’s mother was gunned down by poachers in September 2019 in Mombo concession, viewed as one of safest parts of Okavango Delta at the time. The two foreign poachers involved were shot to death by Botswana Defence Force’s anti-poaching team.

Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) had to literally pull Sisboy away from its mother’s carcass where he had stayed awaiting her to wake up. DWNP feared that if left in the bush the calf was

going to stay at its mother’s carcass until he died. So DWNP had to take it kilometres away for safety at Khama Rhino Sanctuary (KRS.)

The online story of the orphan led to many commentators pouring their grief for him. Some readers at the time suggested that young rhino must be sent to KRS while others suggested it must be given a name.

The author of the story, environmental journalist Boniface Keakabetse suggested the revered nickname of President Masisi: ‘Sisboy’ for the orphan.

The journalist hoped that giving the surviving rhino this presidential nickname would serve as a reminder to Botswana and Government about the impending danger posed by poaching to Botswana’s wildlife and the affiliated tourism sector. Following the sad demise of his mother in the Delta, Sisboy as affectionately now called by wardens and guides at KRS has found a safe refuge.

The KRS has not recorded a single case of Rhino poaching since it was established 1992. The oldest rhino at the refuge is a 42 year old white Rhino cow named ‘Curved Horn’ who was brought to the sanctuary from South Africa in 1980.

“ Sisboy was very depressed when he got here. He kept away from other rhinos and mainly wanted to be closer to humans all the time” Thapelo Baiphethi Chief Warden of KRS recalled.

Baiphethi was briefing Botswana media participants of the Space for Giants African Conservation Journalism Programme during their tour of KRS recently. He told Botswana media contingent that KRS is a community based project setup in 1992 to assist in saving the diminishing Botswana rhino population at the time.

KRS is tucked away on a piece of land covering approximately, 8585 hectares of Kalahari Sandveld. Baiphethi added that the sanctuary provides refuge and habitat for white and black rhino as well as over 30 other animal species and more than 230 species of birds.

Botswana Defence Force (BDF) provides security at the sanctuary and so far not a single poaching incident was recorded in the area.

Baiphethi opined that the security offered by BDF and vigilance of stakeholders at all times are key to protecting the sanctuary in the wake of unprecedented rhino poaching experienced in the Okavango Delta. He stated that KRS location in the central region of Botswana compared to the vast and swampy Okavango Delta's location in the boarder of Namibia has comparatively ensured KRS's safety.

The chief warden said KRS annually spend P 200,000 on community projects in Serowe, Mabeleapudi and Paje villages. The villagers identify the projects they want to be sponsored by KRS.

Duncan Boikhutso, a guide at KRS added: "the community benefits help us ensure that the neighbouring communities support our efforts at saving these mega species. When the people derive the benefits they see the need to conserve and help to prevent poaching"

Chief for Mabeleapudi Village, Sebonego Tebelelo who was also visited by media crew revealed that KRS donated funds for construction of a shelter for Kgotla (community meeting centre), procured air conditioners for community offices and helped with funds for various community celebrations. However, Chief Sebonego added that they have not got the assistance from KRS since the global coronavirus pandemic impact on the tourism sector from 2020 onwards.

## Drought leave Okavango Delta Mokoro Polers struggling

Boniface Keakabetse

Adaptation to the changes in flood patterns and climate change is key to the sustainability of Mokoro (canoe) community poling tourism operations, a foundation of wildlife conservation and tourism in the Okavango Delta.



The Okavango River traverses three countries from its point of origin in Angola passing through Namibia into Botswana where it later spreads into an inland wetland known as the Okavango Delta.

In the lower part of the Okavango Delta is located a Mokoro station called Boro 2. The locals prefer to call the station: 'DRC' because of its liveliness with tourists. This year Boro River dried-up dissipating prospects of a dozen residents dependent on the Mokoro operations.

The Polers are part of Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community Trust (OKMCT), a community based tourism organization that covers six settlements of: Daunara, Ditshiping, Boro, Xuxao, Xharaxao and Xhaxhaba.

OKMCT Seikaneng Moepedi told The Okavango Express: "The aim of the Trust is to achieve wildlife conservation by ensuring that community members benefit financially from the product by poling and getting paid directly by tourists for the guiding services in NG 32."

"our experience since the formation of the community trusts has shown that when the communities benefit from the resource they see a need to conserve it. Due to the impact of low floods and coronavirus the communities have not enjoyed full

benefits they did before the covid era. We fear if the situation prevails people could be tempted to poach."

53 year old Keikantsemang Gorewang is one of the many women irking a living from poling tourists at Boro 2.

"I learnt poling the wooden canoe in my youth. The canoe has been my life for over 40 years. I make a living from poling tourists into the delta to see wildlife." She told the Okavango Express.

The mother of four shared that however the past three years have been tough for Mokoro polers citing a prolonged hydrological drought and the subsequent coronavirus pandemic. "in 2020 our channel dried up forcing us to relocate to neighboring Daunara station. In 2021 when the channel received some water our celebrations were cut short. No tourists came due to the travel restrictions caused by the global coronavirus pandemic. It has been doom for us."

Lenkamile Batsholelwang (42) obtained a poling license in 2005 and was also forced to relocate from Boro to Daunara. "it is tough for us here. We have been forced to leave our children behind. But there is no tourists coming yet and we don't know for how long we will be forced to wait." water."

Batsholelwang expressed worry that since 1998 the channel has been drying quickly. “ water comes only for a short time and dries quickly. Tourism is our only source of income because we cannot grow crops due to elephant’s damage. Those who keep livestock face a big problem of predators preying on their livestock.”

Batsholelwang told The Okavango Express that he was suspicious that the drying spells could have contributed to the rise in Rhino poaching in NG 32. “ As soon the Delta dried up around 2019 we started hearing about the cases of Rhino poaching. This continued during the covid 19 lockdown. We are suspicious that flooded River channels previously made it hard for poachers to traverse the vast Delta to poach. When the channels dried up it made it easy for them to poach something that could have been worsened by limited movement in the area due to the lockdown.”

Dr. Murray Hudson, research fellow at the Okavango Research Institute explained that the dry spells are part of the delta history.

Dr Hudson explained: “ Okavango inflows are highly variable. Historically it IS common to see several successive low inflows, resulting from successive years of low rainfall in the catchment. The likelihood of large changes to rainfall is not so certain; many models indicate the possibility of a bit less rain; others indicate the possibility of slightly increased rain along the Okavango catchment. The uncertainty about the direction of change in the rainfall makes it very difficult to attribute differences that we see in one or two years directly to climate change yet.

Dr Hudson was however in agreement that current climate modelling points to higher temperatures due to climate change in the delta. He lamented that losses of water from the Delta due to evaporation could lead to the reduction of flood size over the long term.

He challenged tourism operators in the Okavango Delta to change and adapt. “They must be ready to adapt to the prevailing circumstances. This could mean, for example, setting up walking trails in the same areas where mokoro trails function in high He advised

Meanwhile Director of Department of Wildlife and National Parks Dr Kabelo urged communities to utilise the Governments National Environment Fund and Conservation Trust fund which respectively funds community projects for climate adaptation and conservation projects.

## BUSINESS

### First Capital Bank Botswana Opens Maun Branch

First Capital Bank Botswana has opened a branch in Maun located at Boseja industrial which will service the tourism village.

Speaking during the opening ceremony, Reinet Van Der Merwe, First Capital Bank Botswana CEO said her bank had humble beginnings with just one branch in 2008.

Now with the opening of the Maun branch, FCB Botswana now sports five branches and 5 loan centres (2 in Gaborone, Mogoditshane, Francistown, and now Maun)..





Van Der Merwe said while their business has grown over the last 13 and a half years at a steady pace, the holding company, FMB capital Holdings got listed on the Malawi Stock Exchange and has grown exponentially with banking operations in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with a centralised IT and operations hub in Mauritius.

“ We have therefore become a Southern African regional bank with branches and assets in excess of \$1.375 billion. This has resulted in our customers benefiting from first class banking services in their home country and in the region. Many of our clients now have banking relationships with us in multiple countries. A number of Botswana headquartered businesses have now started banking with us in other neighbouring countries” she noted

Van Der Merwe said their success is based on our ethos of fast and efficient service but also the support, advice and cooperation provided by Hitesh Anadkat, Raj Patel and our board. With the strength that these relationships hold, I am sure it will continue for generations to come.

Officiating Peggy Serame, Minister of Finance and Economic Development said the opening a new branch is in consonant with the National Financial Inclusion Roadmap and Strategy, which aims at improving inclusive growth of the economy accompanied with improved livelihoods of citizens.

The Minister said the strategy has five priorities, namely; Improvement of the Payments Eco-System; Facilitation of Low Cost, Accessible Savings Products; Development of Accessible Risk Mitigation Products; Improvement of the Credit Market; as well as and Consumer Empowerment and Protection.

Serame explained that financial literacy is an important area for Botswana as a developing country with a relatively young population.

“In this regard we look to financial institutions such as First Capital Bank to come on board and contribute towards the empowerment of citizens and residents of Botswana through capacity building initiatives” she said

Further, First Capital Bank has over the years, been playing a pivotal role in the international Global Money Week which usually takes place in March to educate the youth on money matters. These conversations are important as they prepare the youth to make right choices and improve their future financial wellbeing.

Serame also applauded the bank for its charitable work which includes assisting members of the community in need such as organisations that assist Orphans and Vulnerable Children.

She further observed that since, 2021, the bank has made made donations to four families in Mogoditshane, donated 55 baby blankets, 103 packs of sanitary pads to Princess Marina Hospital and made donations to Lephoi Orphanage in Francistown and Ramotswa School of Deaf.



## LIFESTYLE

### Botswana female wildlife photographer



Botswana female photographer's exhibition promote wildlife conservation

Boniface Keakabetse

Botswana female wildlife photographer, Tshepho Phokoje is one of the few women documenting wildlife and conservation issues in the country. The self-taught Phokoje (40) whose surname interestingly means a jackal, started doing wildlife photography just in 2019.

Recently Phokoje organized a wildlife photography exhibition at Nhaba Museum in Maun called Vixen Photography Solo Exhibition.

The exhibition targets to inspire the community especially potential female photographers across Botswana to venture in to nature and wildlife photography. 33 pictures are on exhibition which is running until end of March.

Phokoje told The Okavango Express: “There is a story behind every picture exhibited here aimed at creating a platform for conversation about animals, how they live in their habitat and ways of conserving them.”

She added: “ my believe is that when people see something like a wildlife photograph at close range they could easily pay attention and learn how to conserve wildlife. This exhibition is a way of bringing animals closer to the people.”

Phokoje explained that she also regularly share the inspiration behind her pictures with different people in her community: “ I have realised that it become more believable and interesting for people to hear stories from someone they know.”

She started from humble beginnings after a friend had saw her picture of an oncoming rainy storm that she had captured. As a compliment the friend borrowed her his DSLR camera to use to take pictures.

Phokoje revealed that she got so determined to achieve that she religiously watched You Tube videos to improve her craft.

She further enrolled for a 6 weeks programme that was offered by American Embassy called 'America On The Move' to learn drawing and painting basics.'

In 2019, Phokoje's picture of a Martial Eagle that she shot while driving through Makgadikgadi National Park became second

Speaking during the exhibition, Botswana Wildlife Training Institute Principal, Moemi Batshabang said it is encouraging to see women showcasing their artistic mettle in the male dominated field of wildlife photography. According to Batshabang wildlife photography is an example of sustainable use of wildlife resources and could also serve as a conservation tool.

"This art requires one to know the environment and animal behavior as well as patience to capture the unique moments in the natural world" added Batshabang.

Phokoje who is also a poet and a writer also gained praise from Botswana Tourism Organization (BTO.) BTO Manager, Thatayaone Mmapatsi described her exhibition as one of potential innovative mediums for growing and marketing Botswana's wildlife tourism and her conservation legacy. "

## TRAVEL

### Refurbished Vumbura Opens April

Reopening in April this year, the completely refurbished Vumbura Plains' fresh new look and feel celebrates its sense of place within the local culture and the Okavango Delta.

New design elements showcase the camp's core purpose and partnership with the Okavango Community Trust (OCT), while art installations highlight Vumbura's heritage through individual stories on basket weaving, local traditional fishing techniques and the area's phenomenal wildlife.



Okavango Wilderness Safaris Managing Director Kim Nixon said :” We are particularly proud of our partnership with the OCT in the Vumbura Private Wilderness Area where we operate Vumbura Plains and Little Vumbura camps. Rights to the use of the concession belong to five villages which, between them, have a population of approximately 5 500 people. We are certain guests will love the newly refurbished camp and look forward to re-opening it in a few weeks.”

The Okavango Community Trust (OCT) was formed in 1996 to represent the interests of villagers in the region. In co-operation with the Botswana government and various stakeholders, it distributes funds for community upliftment and aid to these remote northern communities.

Nixon notes that Okavango Wilderness Safaris has enjoyed a successful partnership with the Trust, the Chiefs and the local communities that dates back to its inception. During this time, and with each successive OCT Board, the partnership has constantly strengthened, with all parties collaborating on a number of projects. These include contributions towards income-generation, farming assistance, and a COVID-relief project that saw 224 tonnes of food distributed to over 28 000 individuals, as well as to other communities reliant on the tourism sector.

By choosing to stay at Vumbura Plains, guests contribute to a partnership that has thrived for well over 20 years, and brought a great many benefits to the people living in this remote area of northern Botswana – through revenue generation, job creation, and alternative sources of income.

Wilderness leases the Vumbura area from the OCT and pays concession fees directly to OCT each year. Together, the camps employ 150 people – almost all of whom come from OCT villages. The salaries paid to these staff members support 20% of the combined population of the villages.

The relationship between Wilderness and the OCT further extends to skills development through an in-house training school (accredited by the Botswana Qualifications Authority).

Through this school, many community members have found long-term employment, as evidenced by the fact that over 70% of the camp staff have been employed for over five years, and nearly 40% for more than 10. Most have risen through the ranks, including a number who have become senior managers within the wider Wilderness organisation, and the tourism industry in general.

Engagement with the OCT also includes the Children in the Wilderness (CITW) programme in the five village primary schools. Here CITW runs environmental education, life skills and leadership development programmes.

By training teachers, running extracurricular activities, Eco-Clubs and annual camps, the programme enhances Botswana's national basic education curriculum. For example, Eco-Club activities include growing fruit and vegetables, poultry farming, and recycling initiatives, all geared towards nurturing future environmentally responsible community leaders and citizens. Most recently, as part of a food security programme, a poultry enclosure has been constructed at Beetsha Primary School with funds from a generous guest donation. Its objective is to provide chicken meat and eggs for the community.

Wilderness also runs ongoing income-generating initiatives in partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). These include beekeeping, horticulture, and milling, with the aim of improving the employability and livelihoods of OCT community members.

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FOOD & BEVERAGE SERVICES (WAITER)	JC OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	7 MONTHS	P1500.00	P750.00	P4500.00
FRONT DESK OPERATIONS	JC OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	6 MONTHS	P1900.00	P700.00	P4000.00
HOSPITALITY, TOURISM & OPERATIONS	JC OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	9 MONTHS	P1500.00	P750.00	P6000.00
HOSPITALITY TRAVEL & TOURISM	BGCSE OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	9 MONTHS	P1500.00	P750.00	P6000.00
PROFESSIONAL SAFARI GUIDE 2	BGCSE OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE+ Driver's license	9 MONTHS	P2500.00	P1000.00	P8500.00
HOSPITALITY & LODGE MANAGEMENT	BGCSE OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	9 MONTHS	P2500.00	P1000.00	P8500.00
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY	BGCSE OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	9 MONTHS	P1500.00	P750.00	P6000.00
EARLY CHILDHOOD	BGCSE OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	9 MONTHS	P2500.00	P1000.00	P8500.00
BOOKKEEPING & ACCOUNTS	JC OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	9 MONTHS	P1500.00	P750.00	P6000.00
COMPUTER APPLICATIONS	JC OR RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	3 MONTHS	P1900.00	P700.00	P4000.00

CONTACTS: 73768690 / 680 1131 | EMAIL: info@careerdreamscentre.org

MOKWASI

# SERVICE GUIDE 2022

☎️ +267 72 987 147 | +267 73 643 243     🌐 Mokwasi     ✉️ mrb@mokwasi.com

## GRAPHIC DESIGN | WEB DESIGN | I.T SUPPORT

Corporate Branding

Company Profile Design

Logo Design

Marketing/advertising tools

Web Hosting

Emails @ your company

Search Engine Optimisation

Networking

Software Installation

Point of Sale installation

Operatins System intallation

Microsoft Office installation