

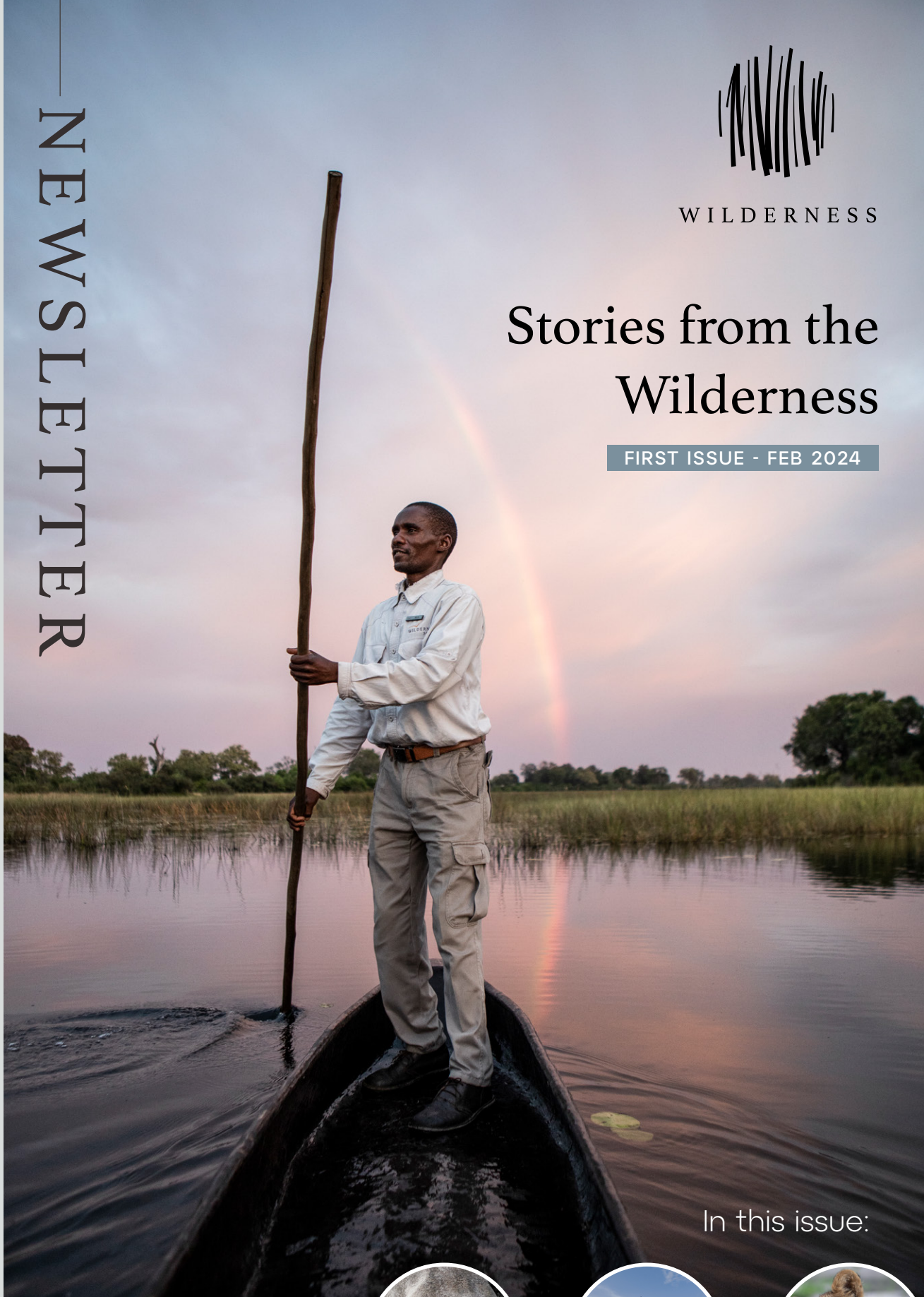
NEWSLETTER



WILDERNESS

# Stories from the Wilderness

FIRST ISSUE - FEB 2024



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# Editor's Note

## Introducing *Stories from the Wilderness*

Dear valued Friends of Wilderness,

On behalf of Okavango Wilderness safaris (Wilderness Botswana), it gives me great pleasure to introduce *Stories from the Wilderness*, a digital newsletter shared every alternate month, right from the heart of our operations in Botswana.

Our purpose always has been, and always will be, what drives us. As a pioneering collective, alongside our guests and partners, we exist to increase the world's wilderness, together. Everything we do – from creating new conservation initiatives to opening new camps – is in support of this purpose.

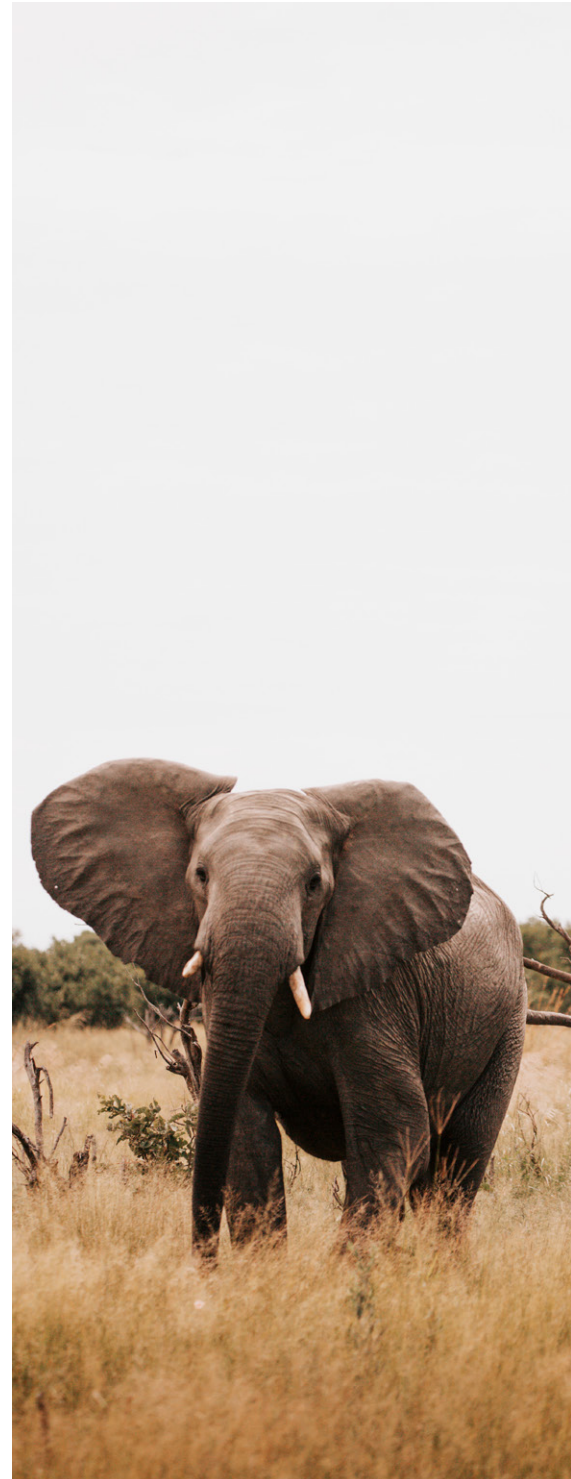
Coming to you from the pristine wilderness we are so privileged to call home, we want to share stories from our teams, our offices and our camps, providing a proverbial ear to the ground and the beating pulse of Botswana, from the Linyanti to the Delta, and from Maun and Gaborone and the Kalahari. As a veritable Friend of Wilderness, we want to help you get closer to the people, culture, tastes, sounds, sights and sensations of what Botswana's wilderness has to offer. And we thought there's no better way to do that than to share the stories which invite you to journey to Botswana's ultimate untamed places.

After all, aren't we all citizens of the wilderness?

We think so...



**Best,**  
**Dawson Kgosi Ramsden**  
**Chief of Staff**







# We Are Wilderness

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You may have noticed that Wilderness has evolved – how we look, how we sound, and in some ways, how we engage. Like the environments in which we operate, evolution remains core to process, and we are no exception.

Our new logo is an expression of both halves of our business: conservation and hospitality. It symbolises the places we protect. Unfenced, untamed, unpredictable. And it symbolises the experiences we create within them.

Around discovery, adventure and exploration. It is an abstracted and raw symbol of the wild, which takes its inspiration from the long grasses representing the diversity of habitats and all the areas where we operate, both now and into the future.

Destinations that truly set us apart. It is designed to invite intrigue, and make you want to push through these long grasses to explore what the destination holds.

## What has not changed?

The passion of our people. Our joy at welcoming our guests and visitors. Our curiosity and

commitment to conservation. Our love for culture and communities.

And our ambition to continue to help you Discover Earth's Ultimate, Untamed Places. Including the unrivaled beauty of Botswana.

We are Wilderness.



# Committed and Passionate: Letter from the Chairman



Dear Friends,

It never ceases to amaze me how exceptional it is for a business, born in Botswana, to have grown into the leader on the continent in the luxury safari space – all the while being a leader too in driving positive impact in our communities and the environments we operate in.

And the reality is, that each and every member of the Wilderness family, across eight countries, has a unified heartbeat within them – a singular desire to continue working as a pioneering collective that, together with our guests and you, our partners, is responsible for protecting the world's wilderness. We fully appreciate that without the wilderness, there is no Wilderness. We remind ourselves of this daily, for we recognise the position of privilege we find ourselves in.



There are three important areas we focus on as we “Discover Earth’s Ultimate Untamed Places” here in Botswana, and how we impact those around us.

**EMPOWERMENT:** Our business creates value for wilderness and wildlife. Employment and small business support and integration reduce reliance on natural resources, allowing us to create a positive footprint for the people in our ecosystem in a sustainable manner.

**EDUCATION:** We recognise that improved education increases economic opportunity, family resilience and support for conservation. Education, particularly in the space of conservation, is crucial for us.

**PROTECTION:** This is predicated on the reality that the quality of our tourism products, and the

sustainability and prosperity of our business, are dependent upon the quality of the habitats and wildlife resources they depend on. Anything that we do that undermines the quality of these resources, undermines our business.

Wilderness has a mission to make a positive impact on the world, and we work tirelessly to achieve it. We believe in creating a better future for all, and we invest daily to make it happen. You can read more about our progress in our Botswana Impact Report for 2022 [here](#), as well as our wider Wilderness impact [here](#). 

It’s a fact, when you visit us, when you stay in our camps, you help



make it possible. For this, we thank you. Our hope is to always drive progress, impact and prosperity for all, in line with Botswana’s National Vision.

It is possible, together.

Best,  
Kabelo N. Binns



# Explore Vumbura Plains with us

Travelling is about more than the places you visit and the things you'll see. It's about people, culture, wildlife, history, and experiencing something you've never done before.

Unrivalled for its wildlife, Botswana is home to some of Africa's most luxurious safari camps. Privacy and wilderness are synonymous here. With a population of roughly 2 million, 40% of our land is dedicated to parks and wildlife, providing the perfect feast for the senses.



We like to think Wilderness Vumbura Plains epitomises the ultimate Okavango Delta luxury safari, offering both land and water experiences. The thoughtful camp design is as expansive and lush as its extraordinary surroundings, with dreamy Delta waterways, green island woodlands and golden grasses teeming with an ongoing wildlife parade ever-changing with the seasons, and always awe-inspiring.

Walk, boat, barge, float, fly, drive, ride, trek, track – and discover a



world of adventures with its own special essence of Botswana beauty.

For more on Vumbura Plains

[CLICK HERE](#)



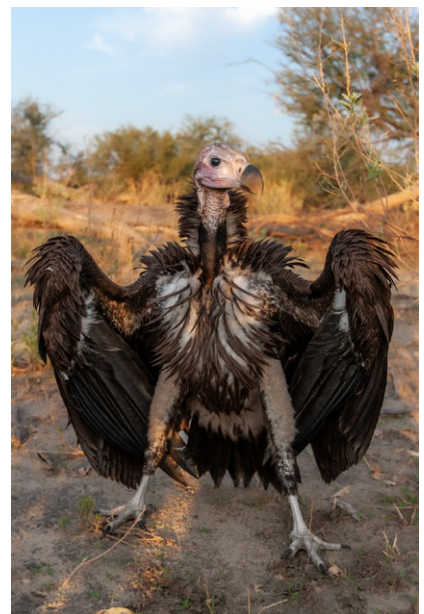




## Special Sightings

Every bush or safari sighting is sensational in its own way. Here are just a few that have had us awestruck, captured by staff and guests alike!

Images by Dave Hamman at Chitabe.





# Faces of Wilderness

The incredible collective of people across our business are as passionate as they are committed to our purpose. They cannot wait to welcome you and ensure your Wilderness experience is nothing short of phenomenal!

One such star at Wilderness is Kegakgametse "Judy" Piti, a waitress at Vumbura South. Unhesitatingly committed to caring for others and ensuring every guest has an unforgettable experience, Judy's personal passions lie in cooking and spending time with family, friends and colleagues.

Judy's work ethic is exceptional, and those who work alongside her will attest to this any day. It's this spirit that helps her ensure every Wilderness guest has a truly magical experience.



# Know your Wildlife

When our knowledgeable and experienced guides take you out on safari, they leverage their training on tracking animal movements to help you experience sightings of a lifetime. Understanding spoor and markings is key to this.

How well do you know your spoor? Or your wildlife...

Can you guess what track this animal belongs to?





# Friends of the Wilderness

We recently gathered stakeholders from Wilderness' exclusive Botswana Members Club programme, to express our heartfelt gratitude for the Members' ongoing support, and the positive impact they enable.

The Wilderness Members Club, inaugurated in 2012 and launched in Botswana in 2017, invites Southern African residents to join the Wilderness community, offering discounted camp rates in exchange for an annual registration fee. The entirety of this fee goes directly to Wilderness' renowned Children in the Wilderness (CITW) programme – the primary driver of the business' Educate pillar in its recently launched impact strategy. CITW is dedicated to sustainable conservation through the development of leadership and education for children in Africa.

"With 397 members in Africa, of whom 75 are resident in Botswana, their generosity is a testament to their commitment to CITW's life-changing efforts. As we mark 40 years of Wilderness, we take a moment to acknowledge this unique group of stakeholders, who provide both direct and indirect support to CITW on a monumental scale. Every renewal by a Member directly adds to CITW's impact. Through this cherished partnership, over 4,500 students have benefited from our programmes over the past 10 years. More than 60 trainers have been empowered to educate our young people on the environment so that they protect this environment and are proponents of conservation in their communities", said Joe Matome, Managing Director of Okavango Wilderness Safaris, and Chairman of the Board of CITW Botswana.

CITW's work spans diverse initiatives, from its Eco-Club programme at partner schools to annual Eco-Camps hosted at Wilderness and partner camps for children in rural communities bordering wild areas across Africa, including Botswana. To date, CITW has enriched the lives of more than 40,000 children in

eight countries. In Botswana, the programme has operated for 22 years, reaching over 2,100 children through annual camps. There are 455 Eco-Club Members in Botswana at present across eight schools in Botswana and with a special partnership with the FNB Foundation at Parakarungu Primary School in the Chobe District.

Insight, care, and commitment are essential for conserving Africa's pristine wilderness. "Our Children in the Wilderness programme focuses on the next generation of decision-makers, inspiring them to care for their natural heritage and become custodians of these areas in the future", Joe noted.

Wilderness, through CITW, extends its commitment to education through initiatives such as a recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Okavango Sub-District Council to enhance infrastructure at Eretsha Primary School. This project aims to construct additional classrooms, ablution facilities, and provide water to create a conducive learning environment for over 200 students.



"Tremendous strides have been made by CITW Botswana, with much more to celebrate in the future. For now, we extend our deepest thanks to our Members and all contributors, weaving this beautiful tapestry of partnership for progress. Mabogo dinku a a thebana. Let's unite for the growth of our community" - Joe Matome










# THANK YOU

Thank you for being a part of the Wilderness collective, and indeed, a part of our community. We look forward to engaging with you more and growing our relationship further, as we support the discovery of Earth's untamed places, together.

Re a leboga, and here is to a blessed and prosperous new year.

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WILDERNESS

Discover Earth's Ultimate,  
Untamed Places