



Singita Grumeti Reserves CONSERVATION AWARD FINALIST 2010

CASE STUDY

Singita Grumeti Reserves, which includes three safari lodges, was established with the objective of protecting a major wildlife corridor along the western border of Serengeti National Park in order to preserve the land as natural habitat – a critical part of the annual wildebeest migration in East Africa – as well as to support local communities living in the area.

The goal is to enable these to benefit from the wildlife resource through the development of tourism facilities targeted to visitors wishing to experience the migration, as well as experience the greater Serengeti ecosystem.



Through the establishment of the Grumeti Fund, 350,000 acres of land were secured for the establishment of a nature reserve. This land area had been the target of large-scale poaching, devastating to the local wildlife.

Initial efforts focused on halting the rampant poaching that was taking place to protect the wildlife, with ecotourism employment offered to local community members. Today, former poachers are now employed patrolling and guarding the reserve to protect the wildlife living in it, as well as migrating through it.

The establishment of three tourism lodges on the reserve, which pay an annual lease fee to the local villagers, provides an ongoing source of revenue to the local communities, encouraging the conservation of their natural heritage. The aim is for these three lodges to provide the majority of the funding for the operation of the reserve, which is currently supported by additional outside funding from conservation groups.



CASE STUDY

The Grumeti Fund has four principle areas of operation: law enforcement (primarily the curtailment of poaching activity); community outreach; wildlife management; and ecological monitoring. In the eight years since the inception of the project, the vast majority of local poaching has been stopped, with former poachers now gainfully employed as wildlife rangers. More than 80,000 kilometres in conservation and anti-poaching patrols are logged annually in the reserves. In addition, wildlife has returned to the reserve in large numbers, and the project is now launching a black rhino re-introduction scheme – one of the world’s most endangered species – an indication of its project success in implementing conservation measures to support wildlife.

In order to engage community support for the protection of wildlife in the reserves, community outreach efforts include the development and support of small community-owned businesses whose goods and services are used by the tourism lodges.

Further resources have been provided to the communities for the development of their schools and to support local teachers, as well as for the drilling of water boreholes for neighbouring villages to facilitate access to safe, clean water without having to walk long distances – particularly beneficial for the local women.



The Grumeti Fund also supports a programme to train local students in environmental conservation so that they can then serve as peer leaders in their schools to communicate this environmental conservation ethic and knowledge to their fellow classmates.

The Grumeti Fund is now working with the three tourism lodges to enhance educational activities and help guests understand conservation and community support projects. It also provides assistance with the implementation of sustainable tourism measures within the day-to-day operations of the lodges, in order to better enhance co-ordination between the lodges and the reserves for the benefit of the wildlife, the natural environment, and the local communities. The success of Grumeti Reserves and the support of the Grumeti Fund are showing how tourism can be an opportunity to protect one of the world’s most iconic wildlife destinations while also delivering tangible economic and social benefits to local people.