

THE TWGA TIMES

PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION, AND EDUCATION

TWGA



*“Those who are happiest
are those who do the most
for others.”*

– Booker T. Washington



Dear Giraffe Lovers,

Happy February. This month is our FOR THE LOVE OF GIRAFFES month, in honor of Valentine's Day. This is your opportunity to share a little love with our Camelopardali. Our website has a link for donating and we would be most grateful this month if you could tap that donate and love our giraffe friends just a bit.

Times are tough.

Our work on Tafakari is slowing down and that means that all of us are scrambling to get the resources we need to breathe life back into this critical and important project. Land is disappearing, giraffes continue to be at risk and Maasai are being pushed further and further from our site at Tafakari. Our deadline is closer than we can express and to make all of the pieces fit, we need resources NOW.

In order to support our giraffe preserve we have to have infrastructure. This means we need to create something that will sustain our giraffes and the people who care for them. That is why we are first building the Wasafiri House. The Wasafiri House (Travelers House) is a two story bed and breakfast model. Through our visitors we will have the income to care for our giraffes and help the Maasai at the same time. We cannot petition the government for giraffes until we can prove we have the ability to care for them. We

make progress every day, but it is hard.

At present, we need 2,000.00 for our architect to draw initial plans, and 12,000 to break ground on our first caretaker residence. We have plans to get these projects underway, but they won't take us as far as we need, so in our last meeting our team devised a plan for February to August. Here are some of our fundraising projects.

Presentations: we will provide a one hour presentation on giraffe conservation and Maasai protection,

Grants: we are all engaged in writing grants for everything from 500.00 to 500,000.

Swag: we are currently designing a series of bags, shirts and hats for you to show your support.

Meet the Mascot: we will be featuring our Giraffe Mascot at local events, parks and festivals for photos and opportunities to join and support The World Giraffe Alliance.

If you can contribute to any of these projects we would be so grateful.

Our donations were down during the holiday season so we need your help now more than ever.

We are standing by.

Sincerely,

Michele and Team Twiga

Truth Passes Through Three Stages: First, It Is Ridiculed, then it Is Violently Opposed, finally, It Is Accepted as Self-Evident



Signs held by Australian protesters. (TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/AFP/Getty Images)

It is widely understood that the Internet is an open forum for any and all content. Lies, half-truths and deliberately misleading information is rampant online. Social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube, in an effort to “hear all voices,” have been complicit in disseminating the propaganda of any group or individual who is eager to meet an agenda.

Online platforms have contributed to a new media landscape which has turned everyone who can hunt and peck on a keyboard into a self-ascribed “expert.” This has fueled the mistaken axiom that every voice and opinion is equally valid. This need to make everyone feel important has come at the expense of true inquiry, and legitimate experts’ rigorous work is simply relegated to the heap of those many, mostly uninformed, voices. Without editors, fact-checkers, or guardians, this spreading of false information is easy and contributes to confirmation bias. The most widely used sources of information—even those shaping our worldview—have now become pandemonium and those who lack skills to discern persuasive propaganda from fact-based reporting, join a melee of conspiracy theories and a growing wave of populist ideology. While this may be harmless when arguing over the details of the Kardashians’ latest antics, it is dangerous when individuals with a devoted following post their impassioned and convincing videos.

Some popular social media hosts are vociferous in claiming that climatologists are alarmist at best and corrupt at worst. These same voices deride renewable energy as infeasible, or—even more egregious—concede that climate change “is real” but actually a good thing. They contend that rising sea levels will benefit wildlife or that melting ice will open up new farmland. The Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) has analyzed thousands of these videos and found a disturbing new trend in “new denial.” Rather than rejecting climate science outright, many YouTubers now marginalize its harms, attack solutions, and spread false claims about its supposed benefits—all while profiting from misinformation.

The negative impacts on the Earth have been documented for many years. For a long time it was simply ridiculed. Later, when the evidence became more compelling, it was opposed. The natural order would be to eventually discover that it is self-evident. Sadly, in our world of many voices, stating that the truth is self-evident needs a twist--“yes, it's true, but look how great it is.” Perhaps the answer in this new society can only be found through individual self-discovery. Perhaps we all need to look at our own weather, pay attention to the birds, butterflies or bees in our backyards. Look at our lakes or shores or natural lands. Ask ourselves, how long will this be here? How different is it now than fifteen years ago? It is up to each of us to be the investigator, the researcher, and the scientist and lower the voices that may or may not have legitimate facts. But we have to care enough to seek the truth for ourselves. Till we find the answer all truth seekers discover. It was self-evident.

A Bag for All Seasons



Inspired by the documentary Plastic Bag. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkbT5007scc> Posted on The World Giraffe Alliance Website.)

I entered abruptly. Tied with my brothers and sisters into a large roll. We were shoved in box with so many others and we traversed a long road.

We arrived and were removed. Then, unceremoniously ripped apart, I was separated from the brothers and sisters, and each of us were sent to a new life. They opened my mouth and dropped wet vegetables inside of me. What was I? I spied one of my sisters. She was neatly wrapped around a young woman's head. Was she a hat? Then what was I? I was nothing more than a receptacle. Is this my life? Was I created to be a holding place for wet vegetables and cold containers? I was carried away and again, placed in a vehicle traversing rough roads.

At least I could know I was useful. My life had a purpose. I was a receptacle. If my siblings saw me I could say, “I am a receptacle, what are you?”

Then as quickly as my purpose appeared, it was taken from me. I was emptied and crumbled into a small ball and shoved into a drawer. And the days passed.

Then, one day, I was pulled from retirement and human hands shook me awake, opened me, checked me carefully for rips, then neatly folded, I was carried in a warm soft hand. I was not a receptacle, I was a companion. I was held gently and hand in hand we walked. And walked.

Then, shaken again! The hand reached inside of me. I could see the ground coming closer. I was scraped unmercifully against cement and crunched against something a warm and foul smelling. My top was tied so unbearably tight I could not breathe, did not want to breathe. Then floating through the air I felt myself fly free with the pile until together we fell landing with a thud in a metal can.

For days I endured this rancid smell, and some of the brethren joined me. None of us spoke. We were too embarrassed by our situation to speak a word. Then the day came the can was lifted. I fell to ground and split open. Wheels over my body again and again and the brown pile now splattered far and away and I worked to pull my sticky self from the asphalt. I could not.

But the rain came. It gently washed away the brown smell and floated me to a curb where the water gushed over an opening and carried me downstream. I floated for days I think. Then at last, I found my purpose. I was to join all of my kind in the great circle of trash. I am here now, sharing my story. I know I am eternal so I will be at peace in this swirl of bags and bottles and cans. Forever and ever. Sigh. It's good to be plastic.

The Hidden Agenda in Wildlife Management

Staff writer The World Giraffe Alliance

When people think of safaris they imagine vast landscapes, campfires, tents and the sound of elephants in the distance. They are swept away with the romantic notion of wild giraffes, lions, cheetahs and monkeys in a pristine and natural environment.

They never imagine the sound of a shot gun.

In the twenty-first century we believe that the barbarism of hunting wild animals in Africa is a relic of the past. It isn't. In fact, game hunting is a major industry in several African countries and its lure is encouraging more countries to abandon their preservation themes for exciting game hunting ones.

A research piece on hunting and the 1973 Cecil Act (Endangered Species Act) reveals the following:

"The Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority receives 60% of its income from trophy hunting license fees." (Catherine E Semcer 2019) Furthermore, Ms. Semcer writes, "Trophy hunting in East Africa is limited primarily to Tanzania which has a large and growing hunting industry using about a quarter of the land surface." (2019)

While Semcer argues that we "need" hunting to control animal populations and feed starving people, the argument is empty when we look at a larger scope.

Cyril Christo, conservationist and photographer, draws a stark contrast, quoting Froude from 1866: "Wild animals never kill for sport. Man is the only one for whom the torture and death of his fellow creatures is amusing in itself. --James Anthony Froude, Oceana, 1866"

Julius Nyerere of Tanzania once commented that it was the duty of the Tanzanian government to, "protect the natural splendors that make this country unique on earth." So why, asks Christo, must we build the Uganda-Tanzania pipeline? Why invade the peat bogs in the northern Congo for oil? Africa will be lost if it is turned into the world's last repository for the industrial north, with its fauna and indigenous peoples sacrificed for short-term gain."

The argument rages. One side contends that human suffering can be alleviated by the revenue garnered from sport hunting, but an opposing view indicates that those in greatest need have been the victims of invasive industries that have caused the poverty and misery.



To make an argument for the infamous practice of sport killing as a means to end suffering is as ludicrous as saying one should remove the water from the fish tank so the fish won't swim in filth. It's absurd.

Aside from the loss of animal life, every hunter who smashes through wilderness, carelessly destroying the unique fauna of an area, creates far more devastation than just the killing of one animal.

So what can be done?

If we genuinely care about preserving the sacred beauty of Africa, we have to shine a light on the insidious materialism of our Western world. Our need for material gain and wealth drives the entropy of practices like hunting. And once we create devastation in nature and among native people, we think to make it better by supplying electricity and televisions and computers, giving innocent people the same disease we have- the addiction of commercialism.

But we still have a chance to protect our big animals and save the most precious places on earth.

Be mindful: everything we throw in the trash becomes part of the world's garbage.

Speak out: to legislators, ambassadors, news media, to friends and neighbors.

Support groups that work hard against these agents of death.

It may start with trophy hunting, but it certainly doesn't end there.

