



## GCC Food Drive Brings Relief to Wildlife Rangers

**June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, TIMBAVATI PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE** – *The Global Conservation Corps (GCC), a non-profit organization dedicated to bridging the gap between communities and wildlife, and Hoedspruit Spar, a leading grocery chain in South Africa, have joined forces to provide more than 90,000 meals (more than 17,000 kg of food) to wildlife rangers and their families during the COVID-19 crisis.*

The current COVID-19 crisis is significantly impacting the tourism industry, generating an estimated 20% to 30% decline in revenue. In Africa, it is estimated that the pandemic will cost the sector almost \$4 billion.

### COVID-19 impacts field rangers

Additionally, during these difficult times, African wildlife and those who protect it have come under increased threats and economic pressures. Due to the outbreak and the resulting tourism industry crash, there is little to no steady income to fund reserve management, leaving wildlife rangers, who are the only line of defense between African wildlife and the increasing threat of poachers, in a precarious position.

“As field rangers, we are going through salary cuts, so we are not getting the money we usually get for our families,” explains Fikile Mathebula, Security Operations at Timbavati Private Nature Reserve.

Thanks to GCC’s close relationship with the rangers, team members on the ground quickly became aware of the rangers’ struggles to feed their families and reached out to supermarket chain Hoedspruit Spar to find solutions.

### Hoedspruit Spar Answers the Call

GCC Founder Matt Lindenberg began to contact local companies to find assistance for the wildlife rangers, who were not only working days on end without seeing their families, but who were also now worrying about how to feed their families on reduced wages. Hoedspruit Spar, a South African grocery store chain with a culture of caring and community involvement, immediately answered the call, offering GCC the needed groceries at significantly discounted rates.

“We were so honored and thrilled with how quickly Hoedspruit Spar responded to the call,” says Matt Lindenberg, GCC Founder. “As a company dedicated to supporting their local

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communities, both through community involvement and local sourcing, they were ready and waiting to do everything possible to meet the needs of the rangers and their families.”

### **GCC GoFundMe Ranger Relief Appeal**

On April 30th, GCC set up a GoFundMe campaign to raise the necessary funds to feed 50 families for six months. The incredible response was beyond anything GCC could have imagined with the target sum of \$15,900 being met in under 24 hours.

Donations have continued to flood in, with \$21,200 raised as of June 2020. These additional funds have enabled GCC to extend assistance to the staff of the Timbavati Foundation, the general staff of the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve, and the rangers working in the neighboring Thornybush Private Nature Reserve.

### **Food Deliveries reach the rangers**

To date, two food deliveries have been made to 50 families. More than 250 people have benefited from each delivery, as there are five people per household on average. Each package weighs 57kg/125lbs and will last a family for one month.

### **The contents of each Spar Hoedspruit package are as follows:**

- 10kg Maize
- 10kg Rice
- 10kg Flour
- 10kg Protein (Chicken)
- 1kg Pasta
- 4 tins of beans
- Assorted Vegetables
- 2L Juice
- 2L Cooking Oil
- 100 x tea bags
- 5kg Brown sugar
- Soup
- Spices
- Bath Soap
- 3kg Washing Powder
- Toothpaste
- Dishwashing soap
- Tissues

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## A Heartwarming response

"It has been incredible to see the reactions of these families, and what it means to have this support during such a challenging time," Lindenberg continues. "In the last few days of deliveries, we have seen fathers and mothers break down in tears of joy with the surprise of receiving these packages. For these families to know that they are supported, loved, and cared for during this time means the world to them, and everyone who has been involved in this campaign should know how immensely valuable their contributions have been."

For more information about the Field Ranger Food Appeal, please visit:

<https://globalconservationcorps.org/covid-field-ranger-food-appeal/>

## Press Contact

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## About the Global Conservation Corps

GCC is a non-profit with the mission to bridge the gap between communities and wildlife. In order to have a world with wildlife, we must facilitate a mutually beneficial relationship between that wildlife and the people who live alongside it. Every child deserves the chance to fall in love with wildlife, but many young people are excluded from the benefits of the natural world. We address this challenge by working with youth in areas of conservation importance to promote conservation education and jobs within the wildlife economy. For more information, please visit <https://globalconservationcorps.org>.

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